Sunday, November 2, 2025 No 302 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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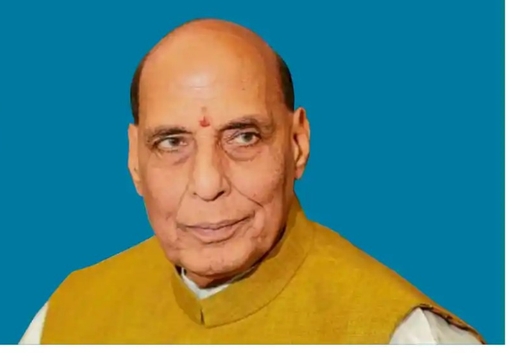
DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

Indo-Pacific should be free from coercion: Rajnath

Defence minister's statement comes amid China's posturing in region

P7



RSS can't be banned at someone's whim: Hosabale

Says organisation not opposed to caste census

P7

RAMAIAH UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

A MOMENT OF PRIDE FOR RUAS

Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Siddaramaiah and Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar honours Dr. M.R. Jayaram, Chancellor, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences.

CONGRATULATING

DR. M. R. JAYARAM

Chancellor

On Recieving

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯೋತ್ಸವ ಪ್ರಶಸ್ತಿ 2025

Heartfelt congratulations to our Honourable Chancellor, on behalf of all RUAS members, for being honoured with this prestigious award in recognition of his distinguished contributions to the field of education.

This honour reflects his steadfast dedication to transforming education and inspiring generations through knowledge, values, and innovation. Under his visionary leadership, RUAS has redefined academic excellence and societal impact, empowering students to become innovative leaders and changemakers.

On behalf of all the members of RUAS,

Congratulations and Salutations

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COUNTER

"I have not done anything for my family...the state's growth has always been my priority. I urge you people to vote for the NDA candidates in the polls and once again give us a chance to serve you and make 'Viksit Bihar' and make it one of the top states in the country

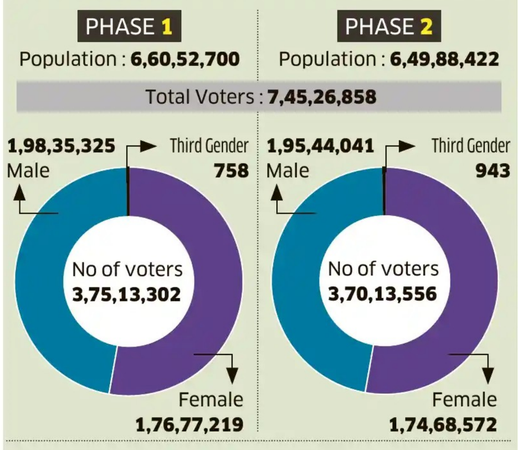
Nitish Kumar
Bihar Chief Minister

V/S

The results of the Bihar elections will rattle the BJP-led government at the Centre. The government there is not going to last long"

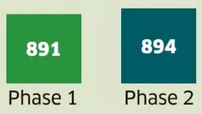
Akhilesh Yadav
Samajwadi Party chief

ELECTOR INFORMATION



NRI	Ph 1	101
	Ph 2	43
Disabled	Ph 1	3,22,077
	Ph 2	4,04,615
100+	Ph 1	6,736
	Ph 2	6,255
80+	Ph 1	5,24,687
	Ph 2	4,87,219
18/19 ys	Ph 1	7,37,765
	Ph 2	7,69,356

Elector-gender ratio
(per 1,000 male voters)



Elector-population ratio

Poll diary

EC transfers Patna SP after Mokama violence

The Election Commission on Saturday ordered the transfer of the Patna Superintendent of Police (Rural) and Returning Officer of Mokama Assembly constituency following the murder of a Jan Suraaj Party supporter. There has been tension in Mokama after Dularchand Yadav was killed during an election campaign. Following the murder, the EC had sought a report from the state at the earliest.

Mamata to lead march in Kolkata against SIR on Nov 4

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will lead a mega march in Kolkata on Tuesday, protesting the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, which will begin in the state on that day. Announcing the programme, the TMC in a post on X said, "The so-called Special Intensive Revision is actually Silent Invisible Rigging. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure that all eligible voters are included and not left behind in this process"

CPM releases manifesto

The CPM, which is a part of the opposition I.N.D.I.A bloc, on Saturday issued its manifesto for the Assembly elections in Bihar. Senior leader Brinda Karat said the party's manifesto was in line with the bloc's commitment to ensuring employment generation in Bihar, from where "people are forced to migrate in search of livelihood to places like Gujarat, where they are denied even the minimum daily wage".

CONSTITUENCY WATCH

BHOREY
(GOPALGANJ DISTRICT)

SUNIL KUMAR
JD(U)
2020: Won

DHANANJAY
CPI(ML) LIBERATION
2020: Did not contest

Begusarai: From Leningard to Mandalgarh

The former Left bastion reflects Bihar's political evolution, from class struggle to caste calculus

FROM THE GROUND

SUMIT PANDE
BEGUSARAI, DHNS

Begusarai was once called the Leningrad of India for this North-Central Bihar district's influence and deep penetration of Marxist politics, thanks to the influence of the Communist Party of India (CPI).

Some 14 km south of the town, on the banks of the Ganga at the Simaria Ghat, tents have been pitched for the holy months of Kartik. Thousands flock here to seek deliverance. Asked how he sees the outcome of the upcoming polls, Umesh Pan — from the Extremely Backward Caste (EBC) weaver community — said: "There is continuity. And it will remain like that."

In a way, Begusarai epitomises India's complex caste matrix, its paradoxes, diversity, and also the failure of Indian Marxists to factor in caste in the dialectical class conflict.

The story goes like this: Bihar's political leadership after Independence remained with upper-caste land-owning communities, including Brahmins and Bhumihars. New political faultlines emerged a decade or so after Independence when the landless peasantry and intermediary castes sought land reforms. Interestingly, the same upper-caste gentry that was also the repository of large and medium-sized landholdings led the movement in North Bihar.

In Begusarai, the penetration of the Left ideology was also hastened by the setting up of an oil refinery at Barauni, 14 km from the district headquarters, and the subsequent growth of other auxiliary industrial units.

Bihar's first chief minister Shri Krishna Sinha was a Bhumihar. So was Chandrashekhar Singh, the topmost CPI leader in the district, whose statue now adorns the party office. His village, Bihat, is right on the banks of the Ganga. It is also home to former JNU student union leader Kanhaiya Kumar, who has now joined the Congress.

The CPI district office in Begusarai.

The implementation of the Mandal Commission report in 1990 and the subsequent rise of political leadership from intermediary and lower castes signalled a decisive shift in Bihar's identity politics, with the emergence of Lalu Yadav, Nitish Kumar, and Ram Vilas Paswan.

When the CPI as a party complemented the social justice politics of the Janata Dal, as in 1991, their alliance won more than 40 out of 54 seats in undivided Bihar. The CPI won nine of these.

Competitors among allies

Allies in politics are also competitors, especially if they influence the same set of people. The drift of the castes and communities that were once at the core of the CPI's class struggle towards parties enunciating social, political, and economic empowerment was but obvious. The new paradigm offered both representation and kinship with the leadership, where the leadership was predominantly upper caste.

Ironically, the rise of the RJD and other Mandal parties was more at the cost of their "natural allies" in the Left.

The BJP, on the other hand, was willing to factor caste dynamics in North India's political landscape and negotiate with social groups. It waited for its turn, and when the larger Mandal block showed signs of fracture, it moved in to stitch its own social coalition with OBCs led by Nitish Kumar, capturing power in 2005.

Former Bihar Assembly speaker and MP Bhola Singh's political trajectory gives a fair idea of North Bihar's political scene and how various social groups negotiated their positions.

Singh, from the upper-caste Bhumihar community, started his political career with the CPI and became an MLA in 1972. He later joined the Congress to become a state minister. With the Congress' fall, he briefly tried his luck with the RJD before finally joining the BJP and winning the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

After his passing, Begusarai is now represented in the LS by Union minister Giriraj Singh — another Bhumihar.

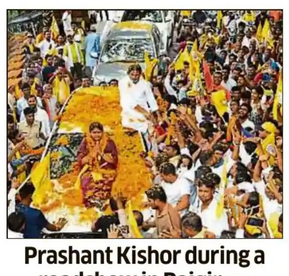
POLITICAL OSCILLATIONS

- Once known for deep Communist roots and CPI dominance, Begusarai symbolised Left politics in Bihar through the 1960s-80s
- The penetration of Left ideology in Begusarai was hastened by the setting up of an oil refinery at nearby Barauni and other industrial units
- Marxist politics mobilised peasants on class lines but failed to address caste hierarchies
- Implementation of the Mandal Commission and rise of OBC leaders redefined the state's political order
- The BJP adapted and built its own social alliance with OBCs led by Nitish Kumar by 2005

Jan Suraaj: An idea waiting for its moment

Voters reluctant to rally behind 'untested' Prashant Kishor

ASHISH PANDEY
MUZAFFARPUR/GOPALGANJ/ MOTIHARI, DHNS



Prashant Kishor during a roadshow in Rajgir. PTI

If one is in Bihar right now, they can hear Prashant Kishor's name everywhere, in campaign trails, loudspeakers mounted on rickshaws or cars, or in places where people gather for chit chat.

Will this energy translate into votes? In tea stalls, roadside dhabas on highways and city centres, people mention him with polite acknowledgment, but do not express strong support.

In north Bihar, Jan Suraaj is mentioned and regarded with respect, but has not yet been widely seen as a winning option.

In Sheohar, Motilal Mahto (a local resident) said, "Bihar voters have always had two options. This time, we have a third angle, but it is not an option yet."

Kishor began his 3,500 km padyatra across 38 districts in the state from the historic Bhitiharwa Ashram in the West Champaran district, where Mahatma Gandhi stayed during his 1917 Satyagraha.

When questioned about his chances, Chhannu Sahni, who was sewing his fishing net just outside the ashram, smiled and said, "One doesn't become Gandhi just by saying nice words and starting a yatra from this pure site; adding any politician who has come here and lied has become history."

The typical voter sees Kishor as an interesting outlier, but when asked who they will vote for, the answer almost always comes back to NDA or I.N.D.I.A.

"PK makes sense, but one needs experience to run a govt," said a shopkeeper in Muzaffarpur. It captures the mood perfectly — admiration without allegiance.

Former journalist and a keen observer of Bihar politics, Pravesh Mishra, said, "At this moment, we can say that PK is more famous on social media than on the ground. An ordinary Bihari is still very sceptical about him."

Kishor could be the difference maker in tight contests. In several seats of North Bihar, analysts believe that Jan Suraaj might erode the anti-incumbency vote, cutting into both the RJD and Congress's bases.

For voters, PK's promise of systemic change at every level feels ideal, but distant, and Jan Suraaj feels like an idea in incubation - relevant, but premature.

Rains dampen leaders' last-minute polling push

ABHAY KUMAR
PATNA

Incessant rains for the last three consecutive days have poured cold water on the plans of top leaders of all the major political parties to campaign in poll-bound Bihar.

At least 22 scheduled helicopter flights were cancelled due to inclement weather and poor visibility here in the state in the last three days.

This comes as a setback to all those politicians who had planned to canvass at the last moment, as barely three days are left before campaigning for the first phase ends on November 4. Polling in the first phase for 121 out of the 243 seats is slated for November 6.

On Saturday, after waiting for hours for his helicopter to take off, Home Minister Amit Shah eventually addressed the Gopalganj rally virtually. He reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2014 promise of reopening sugar mills in Gopalganj.

Meteorological Department sources say rains, caused by Cyclone Montha, may stop from Sunday onwards.

Earlier on Friday, only two helicopters could take off from Patna airport, while others remained grounded due to either waterlogged helipads in different districts or poor visibility.

BJP MP and Bhojpuri actor Manoj Tiwari was lucky enough to take a helicopter ride to Khagaria, while Lalu's estranged son Tej Pratap flew to Simri Bakhtiyarpur to address a meeting.

BIHAR VOTES

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who is not in the best of health, took the road route after he too could not fly on Saturday. Though many of his meetings were cancelled, voters braved rain and used umbrellas to listen to him in Muzaffarpur.

"The BJP had to cancel nine flights, the RJD six, JD(U) three, Congress and the VIP two each in the last three days," said an aviation source.

HAND IN HAND

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Union Minister and LJP (Ram Vilas) leader Chirag Paswan and others during an election campaign rally in Marhowrah Saran district. PTI

Double-engine govt in Bihar run from Delhi: Priyanka

PATNA/BEGUSARAI, PTI: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday launched her assembly poll campaign in Bihar, and claimed that neither the people nor Chief Minister Nitish Kumar were getting respect as the double-engine government was being "run from Delhi".

Vadra, who was scheduled to address two rallies during the day, had to cancel the one at Khagaria as her helicopter could not take off due to bad weather. She, however, travelled by road from Patna for the election meeting in Begusarai.

Upon reaching the venue of the rally, she began her more-than-30-minute-long speech with the remark, "Since I could not take the chopper, I drove to this place and behold the sight of vast tracts of fertile land along the Ganges. So much poverty you people have suffered despite so much of natural wealth all around".

The Wayanad MP claimed, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi says the state will grow under a double engine government. Please do not get fooled. It is just one engine, and that is run from Delhi. The people of Bihar have no platform to voice their demands. Even Nitish Kumar ji, the Chief Minister, enjoys no respect".

She also alleged the PM and Home Minister Amit Shah "spend their entire time in the state blaming Nehru and Indira Gandhi for the problems Bihar faces today".

Can't force anyone to stay in a party at gunpoint: Annamalai

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

K Annamalai, the former Tamil Nadu BJP chief, who confronted the Dravidian parties for about four years, appears to be upset with the saffron party.

K Annamalai

His recent 15-minute media interaction in Coimbatore, during which he asserted that no one can put a gun to a person's head and force them to remain in a party, and raised several questions could point to internal tensions within both the BJP and NDA in Tamil Nadu.

While the BJP can take comfort in Annamalai ruling out the possibility of launching his own party contrary to local media speculation, Annamalai clearly voiced his displeasure regarding the state unit's activities under its new leader, Nainar Nagenthiran, though he did not mention him by name.

"I will speak at an appropriate time. I joined politics inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and I spent my own money to be in politics... If I enjoy being in politics, I will stay; if not, I will quit and focus on farming," he said on Friday.

"No one can force a person to remain in a party at gunpoint," he said, adding that he remained quiet as he gave his word to Home Minister Amit Shah not to criticise the alliance in public.

Annamalai has also objected to the party's treatment of TTV Dhinakaran and O Panneerselvam, which led to their exit from the NDA.

BJP insiders told *DH* that Annamalai feels that the NDA in Tamil Nadu is 'clueless' vis-à-vis facing the DMK in the assembly polls next year, and that could be the reason for his latest remarks.

Under Annamalai, the party set narratives against the DMK government and put the ruling party on the defensive. But now, the BJP and even the AIADMK are struggling to put the DMK on the mat despite numerous issues.

PUNJAB BYPOLL

AAP banks on 'honest governance' in Tarn Taran

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is hoping to continue its winning streak in the bypolls held in Punjab after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections by retaining the Tarn Taran Assembly constituency.

The party is highlighting its "honest governance and development" agenda, while its opponents are urging voters to teach the Bhagwant Mann government a lesson for making "false promises". Tarn Taran will go to bypolls on November 11.

The Congress, Akali Dal and BJP have fielded candidates in the bypoll, which was necessitated by the death of AAP MLA Kashmir S Sohal, who won the seat in the 2022 polls by a margin of 12,588 votes. Rival parties have accused the government of failing to implement the Rs 1,000 monthly allowance for women, mishandling the drug menace, not compensating flood victims, and allowing corruption and law-and-order issues to persist.

The Arvind Kejriwal-led party is banking on its performance in the Assembly bypolls after a modest showing in the Lok Sabha elections. It had won four of the five bypolls held between November last year and June this year, wresting three seats from the Congress while losing one to it.

While the Congress managed to defeat AAP in its sitting seat in the Barnala bypoll, it lost its strongholds in Dera Baba Nanak, Chhanerwal and Gidderbala to the Kejriwal-led party, which also clinched the Ludhiana bypoll in June.

AAP has fielded Harmeet Singh Sandhu, who lost the 2022 polls as an Akali Dal candidate, hoping to replicate the party's earlier success. In the 2022 election, Sohal had polled 52,935 votes, while Sandhu secured 39,347 votes. Congress candidate Dharambir Agnihotri came fourth with 26,535 votes, and BJP's Navreet Singh Hudal stood sixth with 1,176 votes.

A three-term MLA — first as an Independent in 2002 and later as an Akali Dal representative in 2007 and 2012 before facing defeats in 2017 and 2022 — Sandhu will contest against Akali Dal's Sukhwinder Kaur, Congress' Karanbir Singh Burj and BJP's Navreet Singh Hudal in the bypoll. The counting of votes will take place on November 14.

AAP hopes to repeat its electoral success in the bypolls held over the past year. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and AAP in-charge Manish Sisodia have already addressed several campaign meetings in support of Sandhu.

Sandhu has framed the contest as a choice between "traditional and corrupt politics" and a government that works for the common man. Mann said, "Our government has changed the direction of Punjab's politics. The era of fake promises and family rule is over. Now, Punjab stands for honest governance and development that touches every household."

Akali Dal leaders Sukhbir Singh Badal and Harsimrat Kaur Badal, along with Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Warring, have also joined the campaign.

Harsimrat has appealed to women voters to deliver a "befitting lesson" to the AAP in the bypoll for making "false" promises of a Rs 1,000 monthly allowance. Warring has similarly urged voters to hold AAP leaders accountable for their "unfulfilled" commitments.

The BJP has accused the Mann government of misleading flood-hit people by announcing that compensation would be disbursed within 45 days, but failing to take any action on the ground.

Bengaluru Sunday, November 2, 2025 Pages 24 Vol 78 No 302 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

Bopanna hangs up his racquet

Karnataka player had a distinguished doubles career

P10

Big Picture

The cult of clicks

Enter the intriguing yet bizarre world of online fandoms with us, as we explore the love-hate ecosystem it has spawned

Page12

Quickly

At least 9 dead in Andhra temple stampede

At least nine people, including eight women and a child, died in a stampede at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Kasibugga, Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh, on Saturday morning.

The stampede in Andhra Pradesh is the latest to rock the country that has seen a string of them this year, with the most recent being at actor Vijay's rally in Tamil Nadu's Karur and the tragedy at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

Details on Page 3

CM: Policy to save locals' jobs from AI threat

The state government will soon roll out a policy on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to safeguard Kannadigas' jobs, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced on Saturday, adding that the information technology era has now evolved into the Artificial Intelligence era and is now threatening jobs.

Details on Page 3

AAI report on 2nd airport flags challenges

Proximity to the Bannerghatta peak, HAL airspace and hilly terrain are some of the concerns raised by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) team that conducted an on-ground feasibility study of the three proposed land parcels for Bengaluru's second international airport, according to government sources. The report has been presented to the state government. Before that, the AAI team placed it before the Ministry of Civil Aviation for evaluation.

Details on Page 3

Lucknow cuisine gets Unesco recognition

From the silken softness of Galouti kebabs to the intoxicating aroma of Awadhi biryani and the cloud-like nothingness of Makkhan Malai, the notes of Lucknow's cuisine are many, each more delectable than the last, and now recognised by Unesco. The city made it into Unesco's 'Creative Cities Network' (CCN) under the 'Gastronomy' category reflecting global recognition of its culinary heritage.

Details on Page 7

ATF price up, commercial LPG rates cut

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices were hiked by about 1% while commercial LPG rates cut marginally by Rs 5 per cylinder on Saturday in the monthly revision in fuel prices in line with global benchmarks.

Hazard on wheels: Inside India's sleeper bus tragedies

Weak laws, poor oversight and corruption lie at the heart of deadly fire accidents, a grim reminder of how safety takes a back seat on the country's highways

MUTHI-UR-RAHMAN SIDDIQUI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The charred remains of the Hyderabad-Bengaluru AC sleeper bus that caught fire near Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh recently, claiming 19 lives. PTI

"I survived the blaze, but the memory still burns inside me... The fire, the screams — they still haunt me every night," says 27-year-old software engineer Jayant Kushwaha, who narrowly escaped moments after a Hyderabad–Bengaluru AC sleeper bus burst into flames near Kurnool on October 24, killing 19 passengers.

So deep is the trauma that he says he can never again board an AC private sleeper bus.

With inadequate train connectivity and poor services by state-run transport corporations, private operators have come to dominate interstate bus routes across India.

But these symbols of comfort and convenience are now turning into hazards on wheels.

INSIGHT

A maze of weak regulations, lax enforcement, tax issues, widespread corruption and poorly trained crews is fueling recurring bus fires across the country.

The ill-fated sleeper bus belonging to V Kaveri Travels was originally built as a seater but modified later, without proper safety checks. The crew did not know what to do during fire incidents and no passenger knew where the emergency exits were. The bus was carrying commercial goods in the form of 234 smartphones, whose lithium-ion batteries exploded one after another, intensifying the blaze.

Officials from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and state Transport Departments point to various violations by bus operators — unauthorised modifications to increase capacity, extra decorative lighting, installing inverters and the absence of accessible emergency exits — for these tragedies.

While regulations are aplenty, effective enforcement is often found lacking. Since road transport is on the Concurrent List, the Centre sets the regulatory framework but states have complete enforcement powers.

Unlike cars that are crash-tested by specialised agencies, sleeper buses often fail to meet even the norms prescribed under the ministry's Automotive Industry Standards (AIS).

The Union government has no plan to expand the scope of the national crash testing programme — Bharat New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) — to include heavy vehicles and passenger vehicles such as buses and trucks, the Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, told the Rajya Sabha recently.

Watch video: Sleeper bus safety check

In 2017, as part of the Bus Body Code, the ministry notified specifications for emergency exits, door dimensions and gangway width. In April 2019, it made the installation of automatic fire alarm systems mandatory, says a ministry official.

After the new bus code came into force on September 1, 2025, six emergency exits made of breakable glass are now mandatory for sleeper buses. But buses built before September 2025 are excluded.

"During recent bus accidents, deaths could have been avoided with timely help and cutting the bus body to evacuate the injured," says K K Kapila, president emeritus, International Road Federation, a global road safety body.

The existing Bus Body Code has strict norms for passenger safety including mandatory fire extinguishers, speed governors, fitness certificates and fixed time for drivers to prevent fatigue, he notes.

An industry source says it is common for operators to convert seater buses into sleeper ones. While such conversions are permitted by law, operators often do not comply with prescribed rules.

In Tamil Nadu, buses are rebuilt in places like Karur, where many bodybuilders lack expertise in sleeper conversions. "They simply copy designs from foreign manufacturers like Volvo. Another marketing gimmick is to misuse the Volvo brand name to promote buses and attract passengers," the source adds.

▸ Sleeper bus boom, Page 2

Between faith and welfare: The temple fund debate

Upholding the secular spirit of the Constitution requires a careful balance between public interest and religious autonomy

KALEESWARAM RAJ

A recent Himachal Pradesh High Court ruling is the latest that seeks to define state control over temples. In Karnataka, the government in 2024 passed a bill to pool 10% of income from temples earning over Rs 1 crore. In Pic, A rathotsava at Kukke Subrahmanya Temple, Dakshina Kannada. DH FILE PHOTO

The recent judgment of the Himachal Pradesh High Court in *Kashmir Chand Shadyal v. State of Himachal Pradesh* said that diverting temple funds to welfare schemes of the government is impermissible. The court explained that the devotees expect that their donations will be utilised for the upkeep of the deities and the promotion of Sanatana Dharma. It further observed that appropriation of these offerings by the government would amount to betrayal of the trust reposed by the devotees. The court's view reflects a theocratic perspective on the topic rather than a constitutional one.

The judgment makes for an interesting read. It elaborates on the universal virtues of Hindu religion, highlighting its finer traits and inclusive characteristics through references to scholars and judicial precedents. It also praises the role the temples played in ancient India. Curiously, the judgment goes on to commend Vinayak Savarkar and Dr K B Hedgewar, placing them on par with reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Guru Nanak, the Buddha, Basaveshwara and Dr B R Ambedkar. The court further said that "in an era of rapid social change and evolving spiritual needs, Hindu temples have the potential to reclaim their historical dynamism and become powerful catalysts for the transformation of modern Hindu society".

The SUNDAY STORY

The Hindu Public Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act, 1984 is the State law governing the subject in Himachal Pradesh. Section 17 of the Act permits spending of the income for propagation of Hindu religion or faith, for educational establishments and for training disciples of Hinduism. The statute, on the face of it, does not allow the use of temple funds for welfare schemes, as a matter of right. Yet, it does not expressly prevent the government from making such a request either, provided the temple trustees are willing. It is doubtful, given the universal nature of Hinduism and its non-discriminatory spirit which the judgment has tried to project, whether a rigid division between public welfare and religious purpose can hold during critical times, especially in a Hindu majority society. The judgment ends with certain dos and don'ts. It lists 31 areas where the temple funds could be utilised and eight areas where their use is prohibited. This is clearly something that the statute has not explicitly enumerated. The verdict thereby amounts to a judicial addition. Pertinently, the court has prohibited the use of temple funds to support religious events held for "interfaith, social or political programmes" as well.

The sharp division of the society on religious lines as hinted in the judgment is dispiriting and negates the constitutional idea of fraternity. When charity and universal love are the hallmarks of this great religion, as rightly underlined by the court, total prohibition on utilising devotees' contributions for "government welfare schemes" would remain a contentious issue. If this dichotomy is traceable to the enactment, the government could have contemplated a legislative amendment.

However, an amendment would be required only to mandate a diversion of temple funds, and not to enable a voluntary contribution for the common good.

▸ Temple funds, Page 2

DH SPECIAL

Boom in Kinnal craft orders, but no wood to carve

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

The demand for Kinnal artefacts has surged after the reduction of GST on handicrafts from 12% to 5%. PHOTO BY BHARAT KANDKUR

Over the last two months, around 60 artisan families in Kinnal village in Koppal district have been flooded with orders from corporate houses and international clients. The demand for the iconic Kinnal artefacts surged after the reduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on handicrafts from 12% to 5%.

In fact, demand for the craft is growing steadily over the past two years.

Despite booming demand, artisans are struggling to keep up due to shortage of raw materials, especially the Polki tree wood, essential for the craft. The tree species, once abundant in the region, has now become scarce.

"There is a great demand for Kinnal artefacts now. In the last two years, I have received multiple orders from corporate companies and foreign delegates. Since Dasara and Deepavali, I have received orders worth Rs 45 lakh for around 1,400 pieces. But raw materials are hard to find," says Santosh Chitragar, an artist credited with modernising the craft and taking it global.

He explains that alternatives to Polki tree such as teak are expensive and not suitable.

"A six feet tall Polki tree was available for Rs 4,000 earlier and we could make six to eight artefacts from it. Now we are forced to use teak, which costs around Rs 4,000 per sq foot. Also, as teak is hard and heavy, making it difficult for artisans to carve," he adds.

Tree cultivation efforts

The forest department officials say that earlier attempts to revive Polki tree cultivation in nurseries received limited success.

"We collected seeds from the wild, but the seedlings did not grow well in nurseries. The trees regenerate faster through dispersal of branches or stems," said a senior forest official.

Koppal Deputy Commissioner Suresh Itnal, says he has asked the forest department to promote natural regeneration of the trees in their native habitat near Anjanadri Hills.

"The forest department will soon take up cultivating nearly 5,000 Polki trees in their natural habitat. The plant is a fast-growing species and in the next six months, the artisans should get their first harvest. Within a year, we expect full-scale availability of raw materials," he said.

250 artisans trained

Thanks to a combination of innovation and market revival, Kinnal craft has seen renewed interest over the last few years, with over 250 artisans trained to create contemporary designs. Yet, until Polki tree returns in abundance, the very wood that shapes this ancient craft threatens to become its biggest constraint.

Travel

Page14

Whispers of the Silk Road

A stroll through Tashkent's ancient markets, offering everything from spices to crafts and food, makes for an immersive experience

Books

Page13

Breakneck boom

A new book explores what drives the construction obsession of the Chinese state and how it is altering geopolitics

Food & Drink

Page15

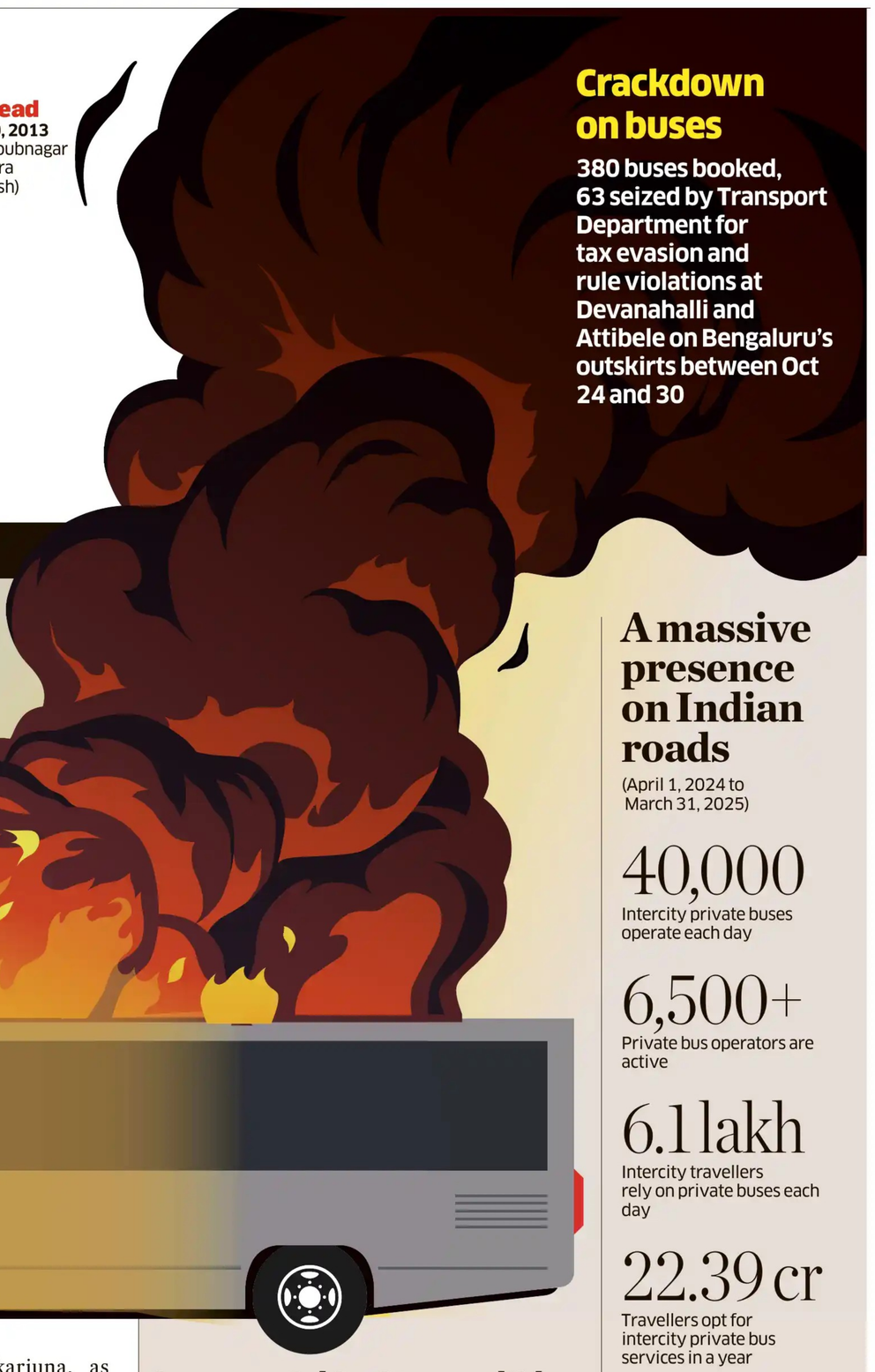
Spice it up!

A dash of chilli oil adds instant heat and depth to any dish, from momos and sushi, to even ice cream or plain curd rice

Fatal bus fires over 15 years

3 dead Oct 28, 2025 Jaipur-Delhi highway (Rajasthan)	**20 dead** Oct 24, 2025 Kurnool highway (Andhra Pradesh)	**22 dead** Oct 14, 2025 Jaisalmer-Jodhpur highway (Rajasthan	**5 dead** May 15, 2025 Lucknow outskirts (UP)	**13 dead** Dec 28, 2023 Guna district (MP)	**25 dead** July 1, 2023 Nagpur-Mumbai Expressway (Maharashtra)	**12 dead** Oct 8, 2022 Nashik (Maharashtra)	**3 dead** July 27, 2016 Varur, Hubballi (Karnataka)	**10 dead** Nov 14, 2013 NH4, Haveri (Karnataka)	**45 dead** Oct 30, 2013 Mahabubnagar (Andhra Pradesh)

Passenger buses, cargo loads, design flaws



Crackdown on buses

380 buses booked, 63 seized by Transport Department for tax evasion and rule violations at Devanahalli and Attibele on Bengaluru's outskirts between Oct 24 and 30

Sleeper bus boom, from Page 1

C Mallikarjuna, Karnataka's Additional Commissioner of Transport (Administration), says passenger vehicles can be converted from seater to sleeper and vice versa but a goods bus cannot be converted to a passenger vehicle.

Upendra Narayan, an expert member of the Kerala Road Safety Authority, says most sleeper buses operating in India are illegally altered by doing away with emergency doors and other safety parameters. Carrying cargo other than that of passengers is also rampant.

Fake emergency exits

In the darkness of the burning bus, Kushwaha found a small window barely the size of a computer monitor.

With no handle, hammer or light, he tried punching and kicking it. After several hard blows, it finally cracked. "I rammed into it with my shoulder and head until it broke open," he recalls.

When buses are retrofitted, emergency exits are often the first casualty.

According to Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, Karnataka was the first state to mandate emergency doors on all buses, whether government-owned or private.

Mallikarjuna, the Karnataka transport official, says all necessary inspections are carried out while issuing fitness certificates. "Everything is in order at that time. But many operators later make alterations or remove mandatory features. We are conducting inspections and will intensify the drive in the coming days," he says.

According to Anand Parthanahalli of the Kalaburagi Regional Transport Office (RTO), many bus operators do not maintain fire safety equipment after a few years.

Perils of commercial cargo

Whether it was the 2013 Mahabubnagar bus fire or the recent Kurnool bus tragedy, one common factor that stands out is the commercial cargo carried worsening the disasters. In the Mahabubnagar tragedy, which claimed 45 lives, the bus was transporting human hair for wig manufacturing. As per the Motor Vehicles Act (MVA) rules, carrying commercial or merchandise goods in passenger vehicles, apart from passengers' personal luggage, is illegal. "Many operators depend on such cargo to meet their fuel expenses. Any extra income becomes profit," says Srinivas Puppala, a retired Deputy Transport Commissioner from Telangana.

The RTO issues separate permits for goods and passenger transport, which are not interchangeable. Vehicles used to carry commercial goods must comply with different regulations, taxes and safety standards.

After a 2011 Supreme Court ruling banned roof loading of luggage, most private operators began using the space between the front and rear tyres for cargo. This compartment space can carry one to two tonnes, generating Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 per round trip depending on the goods. Many buses now have separate under-seat compartments for passenger baggage and commercial cargo.

"Sometimes it is difficult for us to distinguish between passengers' belongings and commercial merchandise (goods). A proper mechanism must be developed like assigning a QR code by the operator that we can scan during inspections to identify passengers' luggage," a senior Telangana RTA official says.

Carrying cargo outside passengers' personal baggage violates the conditions of stage carriage permits. Usually, when caught, such buses are penalised and allowed to continue. "Roof-loading was banned because heavy loads raise the vehicle's centre of gravity, increasing the risk of tilting or overturning while turning. But storing commercial goods under passengers poses greater danger, especially in fire accidents as seen in the Mahabubnagar and Kurnool tragedies," Puppala adds.

S Suresh Kumar, general secretary of the Karnataka Bus Owners' Association, says that about 30% operators transport commercial goods to maximise profits.

A mobile phone dealer says vendors prefer sending smartphone consignments by overnight buses because of their "safety and convenience". "You just pay the driver and he'll he will take care of everything," he says, wishing anonymity.

Bundles of imported cigarettes are also sent by overnight buses from Chennai to Bengaluru. Commercial goods are often undervalued when booking the consignment, he adds.

Road tax havens

Because of high road tax in Karnataka and other South Indian states, many private operators register buses in states like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Puducherry, Goa and Odisha and operate by obtaining the All India Tourist Permit (AITP).

According to an estimate, 75% of private buses plying between Bengaluru and Hyderabad are registered neither in Karnataka nor in Telangana.

The bus that caught fire on October 24 was registered in Odisha. It plied between Telangana and Karnataka, while the accident occurred in Andhra Pradesh. "RTOs can only do limited inspections when the buses are registered in other states," a source in the know says.

Reddy acknowledges high road tax in Karnataka but asserts that it is here to stay. "Buses must pay tax in the state where they operate," he notes.

He also maintains that state transport departments have the powers to check AITP buses and seize them over violations. "Some private operators had legally challenged states' jurisdiction over buses with AITPs. But courts have held that AITP buses must pay local road tax in states where they operate. We can also take action if there are various violations, including transporting commercial goods, altering seats, emergency seat modifications and so on," he explains.

Mallikarjuna, as well as another transport official, admit that many AITP buses operate from one city to another with scheduled stops but say that is not allowed because the permit is only for tourist buses.

Reddy promised action against such vehicles. "Give us information and we will take action," he says.

Noting that bus registrations in other states pose hurdles during crackdowns, he says the ministry has drafted rules to make amends. The situation should improve soon, he adds.

Joint Commissioner for Transport (Bengaluru Urban) A M Shobha says a state has all powers to take action against any vehicle operating within its jurisdiction if it violates rules. "We can suspend permits or recommend other states to take action if there are violations of permit conditions," she points out. Karnataka has formed special squads to intensify checks and has recently recruited 89 inspectors of motor vehicles, she adds.

Suresh Kumar, of the bus owners' association, urges Karnataka to reduce its road tax. "We take AITP permits and register in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and other states. It is causing revenue losses to Karnataka," he adds.

He further says that many operators run AITP buses on intercity routes because there are no separate permit requirements. "The government must change with the times. It is still applying the laws from 30-40 years ago when population was low and cities had not grown so much," he notes.

Rampant corruption

Though most violations by private buses can be detected during fitness checks and regular drives, rampant corruption and systemic flaws hinder effective enforcement. "RTO is one of the most corrupt departments, that is why so many non-compliant sleeper buses are allowed to operate," the industry source quoted earlier says.

Karnataka claims to conduct regular checks against errant buses but it is not clear how often.

In Tamil Nadu, rampant corruption in the bus industry has also been attributed to the system of temporary permits. Bus operators have to obtain temporary permits every seven days to operate on the route which puts them at the mercy of the officials and the department.

Tamil Nadu stopped the registration of sleeper buses in the 2000s and lifted the ban in 2018. Currently, there are 1,535 omnibuses registered within Tamil Nadu that comply with permit rules. However, 905 buses registered in other states with all-India permits have been asked to re-register in Tamil Nadu. The bus lobby remains powerful and authorities seldom take action when fares are hiked during festivals.

After a tourist bus accident killed nine people in Palakkad in October 2022, Kerala's Motor Vehicle Department carried out massive drives and exposed rampant violations—alterations in bus design, fixing lights that distract drivers of other vehicles, seating capacity violations and carrying unattended cargo.

Driver woes

Drivers say pay is low and owners drag their feet on attending to complaints about bus breakdowns. Drivers often accommodate passengers within the limited space in their cabin, increasing the chances of mishaps during overnight trips.

"Bus owners neither pay us well nor on time. We are forced to look for extra cash by carrying passengers on vacant seats or transporting goods. We also have to undertake repairs by hiring local mechanics during breakdowns because company mechanics show negligence in addressing major problems," says Shivakumar N, who has driven tourist buses for five years now.

According to Mallikarjuna, the Transport Department has directed bus operators to demonstrate emergency exit procedures before departure — much like safety briefings on flights. Policy fixes may make bus travel safe again, but for survivors like Kushwaha, no safety demo can erase the memory of the flames.

(With inputs from Ajith Athrady in New Delhi, Arjun Raghunath in Thiruvananthapuram, Asra Mavad in Bengaluru, E T B Sivapriyan in Chennai, SNV Sudhir in Hyderabad and Vittal Shastri in Kalaburagi)

SYSTEM BREAKDOWN: PRIVATE BUSES IN CRISIS

Three fatal bus fires within a month have reignited concerns over safety lapses in the country's private long-distance bus network

Illegal modifications, design code violations, untrained staff and overworked drivers are among the key factors behind these recurring accidents

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways enforced AIS 153, an updated Automotive Industry Standard, in September 2025 to enhance passenger safety and ensure better bus design quality

However, enforcement remains a challenge as compliance may involve additional investment

Gross ticketing value up

Q4 FY24 ₹49 bn

Q4 FY25 ₹59 bn

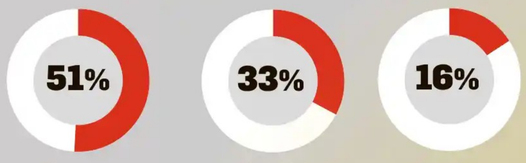
Small towns drive the luxury bus boom

32%* Passengers who travelled from six metros

68% Travel from non metro or Tier 2 & 3 cities

*Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata

Types of buses operating



A massive presence on Indian roads

(April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025)

40,000 Intercity private buses operate each day

6,500+ Private bus operators are active

6.1 lakh Intercity travellers rely on private buses each day

22.39 cr Travellers opt for intercity private bus services in a year

Rs 969 Average price per seat

4.24L Unique bus routes

72,000+ New intercity routes launched in 2025

Luxury outside, danger within

- Luxury buses have narrow, dim walkways
- Most buses are modified in body workshops, compromising structural integrity
- Faulty wiring, overloaded inverters and flammable interiors make fires spread rapidly
- Emergency doors and window hatches are often jammed or poorly marked, trapping passengers during crises
- Drivers and crew lack formal fire and evacuation training
- Buses get fitness certificates and route permits without proper inspection for safety compliance

SYSTEM LOOPHOLES

Permit issue

- Most inter-city private buses run on stage carriage or All India Tourist Vehicles Permit (AITP) Rules 2023.
- AITP allows operation of only tourist buses after paying fees to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The fee ranges from Rs 20k to Rs 3 lakh annually or Rs 6k to Rs 90k per quarter. However, several inter-city buses operate overnight using AITP

Registration issues

- While Karnataka has nearly 500 pvt bus operators, over 4,000 running here are registered in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Goa, Puducherry and other states/UTs due to lower road taxes
- Operators claim that neighbouring states still collect local road tax from Karnataka buses irrespective of the permit
- In contrast, many out-of-state buses enter Karnataka without paying any state tax or holding valid AITP permits
- Many are registered without physical inspection in the home state in violation of the Automotive Industry Standards for bus code.

30% operators violate norms

Passenger buses are barred from carrying commercial goods, and flammable or explosive materials. Yet, an estimated 30% of private bus operators transport commercial luggage to offset losses from low occupancy rates and maximise profits.

(Sources: Coachbuilders India.com, media reports, Redbus India bus track report)

COMPILED BY DIVYASHRI MUDAKAVI DH GRAPHICS: RAMU MASTAIAH

INTERVIEW

Bus fire: A survivor's account

The Hyderabad-Bengaluru bus that caught fire near Kurnool claimed 19 lives recently. Among the survivors was 27-year-old engineer **Jayant Kushwaha**. In conversation with **DH's SNV Sudhir**, he recounts the night of horror. Excerpts:

What happened on the night of the accident?

I boarded the bus around 10.30 pm in Hyderabad. The accident occurred around 2:30 am. I was asleep when a sudden jolt and strong vibrations woke me. The bus had hit a motorbike and dragged it for nearly 200 metres. At first, I thought it was just a rough patch but soon saw flames near the front. First, I assumed it was a headlight reflection in the rain until smoke filled the cabin. Panic erupted as people screamed and searched for a way out.

How did you manage to escape?

I grabbed my phone and laptop bag and ran to the front, but the main door was jammed. Someone shouted about an emergency exit at the back. In the chaos, I found a small window, no handle, hammer or light. I punched and kicked until it cracked, then broke through with my head and shoulder. Amid choking smoke, I jumped barefoot, injuring my foot but running as the bus burned. Within minutes, flames engulfed the bus. Around 24 passengers survived. Some escaped through the rear and driver's windows, others through shattered side windows. The scene still haunts me.

Have you felt unsafe in AC sleeper buses before?

These buses are convenient and such incidents are rare. I sometimes felt uneasy since AC sleepers have poor ventilation. From now on, I would choose a government or non-AC bus where one can at least open a window to escape.

The fire, the people crying, that suffocating smoke — it all comes back the moment I close my eyes. I just hope no one else ever has to relive such horror again.

Temple funds, from Page 1

Humanistic state-temple relationship holds the key

There are similar statutes on establishment and management of Hindu religious endowments in different states. They prescribe different methods for managing the endowments. Normally, the courts are not expected to expand or reduce the scope of these prescriptions.

Public by nature

The public character of temples, even those that were previously private entities, cannot be lost sight of. They are built by the people, not by the kings, as is commonly believed. This is qualitatively different from the private properties of sematic religions, sometimes funded from abroad. This is the rationale behind the State regulating the administration of such temples, without, however, interfering with the religious rights of the devotees. Even in the case of wakf properties, the government has considered it appropriate to regulate their management, as reflected in the recent amendment to the Wakf Act.

A deity is a legal person recognised by law. Yet, the temple properties will have to be managed responsibly and transparently, with a high degree of accountability. This could be done only by a method prescribed by law. This in turn legitimises the State's control over traditional religious establishments.

Let us consider the context. The Congress government in Himachal Pradesh had decided to request temple trusts in the state to contribute to welfare schemes for vulnerable children. The judgment, while extolling the magnanimity of Hinduism, prohibits even the willing temple trusts from supporting the government's welfare schemes. This paradox is not merely legal or technical; it is essentially jurisprudential.

A secular or constitutional view on the issue is bound to be generous, egalitarian, compassionate and inclusive, qualities which the high court's judgment, unfortunately, lacks.

A major opposition to the State government's request came from the BJP. The opposition party in the state said that the move was an attempt to "drain temple funds" to rescue the government from its financial crisis. The judgment, by imposing a judicial ban even on a request for assistance in difficult times, interferes with both the functional autonomy of the temple trustees and the political autonomy of an elected government.

According to data, 95.2% of the population in Himachal Pradesh are Hindus. All other religions together constitute less than 5% of the population. If the temple funds are used for the welfare of the people, it precisely means using people's money for people's welfare. Now, the state will have to amend the law, enabling voluntary contribution by the temples towards a common pool for welfare of the public.

A common pool

A move on these lines was undertaken in Karnataka, where the legislature passed The Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Bill in March 2024. According to the bill, 10% of the gross income of the temples whose gross annual income exceeds Rs 1 crore will be put in a common pool. The Bill also mentioned that 5% of the gross income of temples whose annual income is between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore will be used for the pool. The BJP strongly opposed the legislative move. Yet, the Bill was passed. The Karnataka governor has reserved the bill for Presidential assent.

A democratic, inclusive and humanistic relation between the State and religious institutions is essential for secular India. In Kerala, most of the public temples are managed by Devaswom Boards, which function under political control, though with several statutory riders. The government has also extended financial support to Devaswom Boards during critical times.

In Madhya Pradesh, despite the BJP government's promise "to free Hindu temples from government control", it remains an unfinished task due to practical challenges. In other states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the state control over public temples has helped prevent mismanagement by individuals. Over time, Indian states have largely succeeded in striking a fine balance between public interest and religious autonomy. The challenge now is to preserve this symbiotic relationship nationwide by upholding the secular and republican spirit of our democracy, which encompasses religious freedom.

Dr B R Ambedkar famously said that, like the path to heaven, the path to social reforms in India is strewn with hurdles. The judgment, instead of reducing such hurdles, only multiplies them.

(Kaleeswaram Raj is a lawyer in the Supreme Court of India)

At least 9 dead in stampede at Andhra temple

Srikakulam shrine draws 25k pilgrims; no nod for gathering

SNV SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

At least nine people, including eight women and a child, died in a stampede at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Kasibugga, Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh, on Saturday morning.

The stampede in Andhra Pradesh is the latest to rock the country that has seen a string of them this year, with the most recent being at actor Vijay's rally in Tamil Nadu's Karur and the tragedy at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

Known as "Chinna (Small) Tirupati" in surrounding areas, the temple was opened just four months ago by a private religious trust and doesn't come under the state's endowments department.

The tragedy occurred as thousands of devotees poured into the temple early morning to mark the first Ekadashi celebration of the Karthika month.

According to police reports, the stampede began just as the temple gates opened, creating a dangerous surge at the entrance. A metal railing collapsed under the mounting pressure as two groups of devotees collided, one attempting to enter the sanctum through the exit gate while another group was exiting after darshan.

Seven devotees died at the scene, while two others succumbed to injuries at the hospital. Fifteen people were shifted to the community health centre in Palasa, where three remain in serious condition and the rest are stable.

Designed to accommodate 2,000 to 3,000 people, the temple was deluged by nearly 25,000 devotees on Saturday. The absence of official permissions and adequate planning intensified the disaster.

"There are designated entry and exit gates for the sanctum," recounted an eyewitness. "However, as crowds surged throughout the morning, some people attempting quick entry or unfamiliar with the layout tried entering through the exit gate. As devotees streamed out from the same gate after darshan, confusion erupted, eventually causing the queue railing to collapse and triggering the stampede."

Rescue and medical teams rushed to the scene alongside the local MLA, Minister K Atchan Naidu, and Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu, who arrived from Delhi upon learning of the disaster.

▸ Stampede, Page 6

Andhra Pradesh minister K Atchannaidu at the temple in Srikakulam district on Saturday. PTI

TRAGEDY IN SRIKAKULAM

1. Devotees pour into temple to mark first Ekadashi celebration; stampede begins as crowd surges at entrance
2. Two groups of devotees collide - one attempting to enter the sanctum through exit gate hoping for a quick entry while another group is exiting after darshan
3. Confusion erupts and queue railing collapses; people fall from height of 6 ft on one another
4. Known as "Chinna (Small) Tirupati", the temple was opened just four months ago and doesn't come under the state's endowments dept

TEMPLE STAMPEDE INCIDENTS IN ANDHRA

April 2025: Seven people died when a rain-soaked wall collapsed at the Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Simhachalam, Visakhapatnam

Jan 2025: Six devotees died and dozens were injured in a stampede as pilgrims jostled for tickets to enter through the Vaikunta Dwaram at the Tirumala hill shrine

July 2015: At least 27 pilgrims died and 20 were injured during a stampede at the Maha Pushkaralu on the Godavari river banks in Rajahmundry

The man behind 'chinna' Tirupati

The Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Srikakulam owes its existence to 94-year-old Hari Mukunda Panda. A decade earlier, Panda had an unpleasant experience at Tirumala temple. Determined to create a similar shrine, he devoted 12 acres of his 50-acre estate to build the temple and invested his own funds. Page 7

Koragas give clues to Indians' 6th genetic ancestry

M'luru, Swiss teams study tribes on K'taka, Kerala coast

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Genetic signatures found in a marginalised tribe in coastal Karnataka and Kerala have provided an Indo-European team of scientists with a breakthrough to untangle the complex migratory history of modern Indians, whose ancestors reached the subcontinent thousands of years ago from diverse regions across the globe.

While five genetic components of Indian ancestry are known, the team has now spotted a previously unidentified sixth one relying on the clues hidden in the genes of Koraga tribes living in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala.

"We call these distinct signatures as 'proto-Dravidian', which emerged around the dawn of the Indus Valley Civilisation around 4,400 years ago," team leader Ranajit Das, a geneticist at Yenepoya University, Mangaluru told *DH*.

Others in the team — Jaison Jeevan Sequeira, Mohammed Mustak and Swathy Krishna M — are from Mangalore University and Yenepoya University respectively while George van Driem is at the University of Bern, Switzerland.

The researchers said their findings bolster support for the hypothesis that a "Dravidian heartland" existed between Iran and the Indus Valley, much before the arrival of Indo-European languages in the subcontinent.

Such a Dravidian zone extending outside north-western India no longer exists, but its relics are still seen in the languages used by a tribe in Pakistan and a few others in India.

There are five distinct genetic components of Indian ancestry beginning with the South Asian hunter gatherers who came via the Out-of-Africa route around 60,000 years ago. Their genetic signatures are still seen among Andaman and Nicobar tribes.

The hunter gatherers lived for more than 50,000 years before the Neolithic Iranian farmers arrived nearly 6,000-8,000 years ago. They were followed by Caspian Steppe pastoralists around 3,000-4,000 years ago. In addition, there were Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic groups that imparted Mongoloid features and specific traits in some of the tribes.

Scientists had held that a mixture of the five gene pools created the genetic make-up of modern Indians. The Mangaluru team has now added a sixth component to the pot.

New findings

- Researchers say their findings bolster support for hypothesis that a "Dravidian heartland" existed between Iran and the Indus Valley
- Such a Dravidian zone no longer exists, but its relics are still seen in the languages used by a tribe in Pakistan and a few others in India

"This doesn't mean Koragas came from Iran. They only carry those proto-Dravidian signatures. Nearly 20% of an Indian's genetic make-up are these proto-Dravidian genetic components. It shows those ancestors were widespread," Das said.

The team untangled the knots by approaching the problem from two sides. While scientists traced genetic history, linguists created a unique tree to look for specific language-signatures and then matched them with the genetic footprints.

"The similarity of DNA of the Koraga and old Neolithic samples from eastern Iran, points to the Koraga language, which the authors have called 'proto-Dravidian', being rooted in Elamo-Dravidian," said Partha Majumder, a population geneticist and former National Science Chair, who is not associated with the research.

▸ Koragas, Page 6

AAI report on Bengaluru 2nd airport flags terrain and airspace challenges

DH SPECIAL

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Proximity to the Bannerghatta peak, HAL airspace and hilly terrain are some of the concerns raised by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) team that conducted an on-ground feasibility study of the three proposed land parcels for Bengaluru's second international airport, according to government sources.

The report has been presented to the state government. Before that, the AAI team placed it before the Ministry of Civil Aviation for evaluation.

The report highlights the challenges of setting up an airport at the three proposed locations — two adjacent land parcels on Kanakapura Road near Harohalli (4,800 acres and 5,000 acres) and a 5,200-acre area on Kunigal Road near Nelamangala.

"The report does not approve or disapprove of either location," Industries Minister M B Patil told *DH*. "It merely states the challenges prevalent at each of the locations. Each location has its pros and cons. Now, our team will carry forward this report and do our own feasibility and viability studies before we decide on a location. We'll also look at the technical and financial feasibility."

> The report does not approve or disapprove of either location. It merely states the challenges prevalent at each of the locations. Each location has its pros and cons. Now, our team will carry forward this report and do our own feasibility and viability studies before we decide on a location. We'll also look at the technical and financial feasibility
>
> **M B Patil**
> Industries Minister

The minister is looking at roping in "top consultancy firms" to get the project started. Once that is sorted, the next move is to rope in private developers. "The viability study is extremely important as it will determine the passenger capacity and other important factors. It is what the private developers are interested in. We want to ensure that the private developers show interest," he added.

So far, the Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL) has shown keen interest in taking on the second airport, with Hari Marar, the managing director of BIAL, appealing to the government to fast-track the process back in 2023. Among the challenges highlighted in the report are proximity to the Bannerghatta peak, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) airspace, and the hilly terrain, a well-placed source with the Industries Department told *DH*.

Proximity to the Bannerghatta Hills is a common challenge for building an airport in either of the locations, a senior AAI official told *DH*.

"When the aircraft is ascending or descending, the Bannerghatta peak is of concern. The proximity of the locations needs to be thoroughly studied, keeping in mind various scenarios of landing or taking off," the AAI official said.

▸ AAI report, Page 6

CM: Policy soon to shield Kannadigas' jobs from AI threat

BENGALURU, DHNS: The state government will soon roll out a policy on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to safeguard Kannadigas' jobs, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced on Saturday.

Addressing a gathering during the 70th Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations organised by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Siddaramaiah said, "The information technology era has now evolved into the Artificial Intelligence era and is now threatening jobs. To prevent this, we are trying to bring out a policy. The government is also committed to preparing Kannada for such global challenges."

Amid the government's move to introduce English medium education from the primary level itself, Siddaramaiah said, "Ignorance of Kannada language in the education system has created several problems. Kannada today is facing a crisis which no other developed language of the world is facing. Children of developed countries think, learn and dream in their mother tongue. But the situation here is completely opposite. Languages like Hindi and English are weakening our children's talent."

He opined that there is a need to bring necessary laws to implement mother tongue as the medium of instruction. "Even the Centre has to focus on this," he said.

▸ AI threat, Page 6
More reports on Page 4B

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at the 70th Karnataka Rajyotsava celebrations in Bengaluru on Saturday.
DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

CM: Centre neglecting Karnataka

CM Siddaramaiah alleged that Centre was betraying Karnataka by not sanctioning developmental oriented schemes. "Though Kannada was granted the classical language status, no funds have been provided," he said.

Rave party busted near B'luru; 102 people tested

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru South Police raided a rave party on the outskirts of the city in the early hours of Saturday, officials said, adding that as many as 102 participants were taken for a medical test (urine and blood) to ascertain if any narcotics had been consumed.

There were 35 women and three minor boys among those taken for the medical test. Sleuths from the Kaggalipura police station recovered e-cigarettes, some stubs and 10 grams of ganja from the party venue.

Details on Page 4

Indian women on the cusp of history

India face South Africa in the Women's World Cup final at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on Sunday, with a new champion set to emerge after Australia, England and New Zealand.

India v South Africa in women's ODIs

	Mats	Ind Won	SA Won	NR
Overall	34	13	20	1
In India	16	7	9	
In World Cups	6	3	3	

> The whole crowd will be behind India, probably the entire stadium. It's going to be a very exciting opportunity. At the same time, it puts a lot of pressure on them as well.
>
> **Laura Wolvaardt**
> SA captain

The team is fully charged up: Kaur

Page 9

> We know how it feels to lose. But we are looking forward to how it feels to win. Hopefully tomorrow is a special day for us, we have done a lot of hard work, and it's only about getting everything (done) tomorrow.
>
> **Harmanpreet Kaur,** Indian captain

B'luru-Kochi Vande Bharat schedule out

KOCHI, PTI: The Ministry of Railways has announced the schedule for the new Bengaluru–Kochi Vande Bharat Express, which is set to commence operations soon.

Train number 26651 KSR Bengaluru–Ernakulam Junction Vande Bharat will depart from Bengaluru at 5.10 am and reach Ernakulam Junction at 1.50 pm.

In the return service, it will leave Ernakulam at 2.20 pm and arrive in Bengaluru at 11 pm with stops at Krishnarajapuram, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, and Thrissur.

Tunnel road: DKS says ready to form committee under BJP's Ashoka

BENGALURU, DHNS

A day before the BJP's proposed protest against the tunnel road project in Bengaluru, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said on Saturday that he was ready to form a committee on the tunnel road under the leadership of Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka.

TUNNEL TANGLE

"I am ready to form a committee on the tunnel road under the leadership of R Ashoka and also design entry and exits at the spots they suggest," Shivakumar said, adding that the government was ready to include anyone in the panel.

"There is no need for Ashoka to sit in protest because he is also a legislator from Bengaluru and he has his own responsibility. Let the committee give suggestions and directions. We will include any member they recommend. Let's all work together," the deputy CM said.

He had inspected the entry and exit points of the proposed infrastructure at Lalbagh on Friday.

▸ Tunnel road, Page 6

'Dumping back garbage as a lesson'

Shivakumar on Saturday defended the GBA's move to dump garbage at the doorsteps of litterbugs, stating that it was being done to teach them a lesson. "...The litterers are being identified and the garbage they dumped on the streets is being dumped back to their doorstep as a lesson."

Details on Page 4

GOOD DOZE

Study: Don't sleep over insomnia, it's linked to mental health

DH SPECIAL

KUSHAGRA BHARDWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

What began as restless nights soon consumed his days. Sleepless and drained, a middle-aged man from Bengaluru was left jobless after he could sleep for just less than two hours. With burning eyes, high levels of dysfunction and shattered hopes, the man could not even step out of his house. However, therapy brought slow but steady recovery, and eventually, a return to work and normalcy.

The intervention was part of a recent pilot study from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (Nimhans), which has revealed that improving sleep health can significantly enhance well-being, specifically for people suffering from common mental disorders like depression and anxiety.

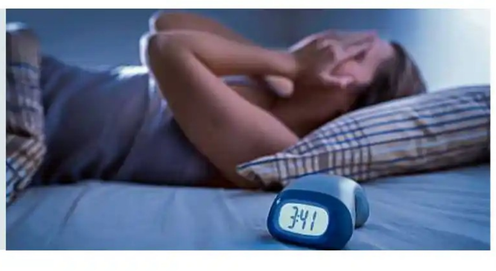
The study, by Jemimah A Johnson, a PhD Scholar at the Department of Clinical Psychology, Nimhans, under the guidance of Dr Paulomi M Sudhir, Professor of Clinical Psychology, explores sleep not merely as a symptom of mental distress but as a central factor in psychological and physical health.

"While sleep has long been treated as an afterthought in mental health care, it needs to be recognised as a primary public health concern. Poor sleep doesn't just result from mental illnesses, it can also contribute to it," said Jemimah.

Contrary to the general view that sleep health is measured by duration, Jemimah explained that it should be understood based on six established dimensions: sleep regularity, satisfaction, alertness, timing, efficiency and duration.

Standards of good sleep health

- Sleep regularity
- Satisfaction
- Alertness
- Timing
- Duration
- Efficiency



After conducting a survey among over 20 patients and interviews with six mental health experts, the researchers experimented with an 8 to 10-session therapeutic intervention.

It was designed to improve sleep health among individuals aged 18 to 59 who reported both sleep disturbances and common mental health concerns.

The one-on-one intervention, which lasted over two months, was tested on five participants who underwent pre-, post-, and three-month follow-up assessments. Each weekly session lasted between 50 minutes and one hour and targeted both behavioural and cognitive patterns (like worries, ruminations) related to sleep and their mood. The results of the pilot intervention revealed that it not only improved sleep health but also saw improvement in coexisting mental health conditions. "Participants felt less helpless, anxious, more confident in themselves, and more capable of managing emotions and routines," Jemimah told *DH*.

"While speaking to patients, we found something interesting: a lot of people tried to excessively control their sleep using various strategies. When these attempts were futile, they felt anxious, helpless and it further worsened their sleep. Through therapy, we tried to break this notion and made them accept sleep as a natural process and not to force it," the researcher said.

Participants in the study described how their long-standing sleep difficulties affected their concentration, memory, emotional stability and interpersonal relationships.

▸ Insomnia, Page 6

RISKY SHELTER Many continue to operate without CCTV surveillance, guards, or licence

Are city's PG accommodations skimping on safety?

ASHWIN B M & SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Over the last year, there has been a slew of deaths and murders at Paying Guest (PG) accommodations in the city. While the incidents forced the police and the local authorities to enforce stringent norms on these accommodations, the situation on the ground has not changed much, a reality check by DH revealed. Many inmates at various city PGs also told DH that there was no sense of safety.

DH visited over six ladies' PGs and five gents' PGs. While many of them did have CCTV cameras, at least three had no visible cameras at the entrance. Even in PGs that had cameras, they were poorly placed, offered low coverage, and were installed at only one point—clearly indicating they served no real purpose.

The majority of them did not have a security guard, and the gates were open almost 24/7 for anyone to walk in. An inmate at one of the PGs said that the owner did not bother to appoint a full-time caretaker and hence the doors had to be kept open for people working in shifts.

"There are many people working at call centres and working in different shifts. Hence, the main door can't be closed since people will be leaving and returning from work. Though we have a watchman manning the gate, the caretaker leaves by 7 pm, meaning that the guard has to take complete control of the building," said an inmate at a PG in Rajajinagar.

The situation is similar at many other PGs. Apart from safety, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has also laid down some standards for operation. To prevent overcrowding, the GBA had directed PG owners to ensure that a minimum of 70 sq ft of personal space is available for each resident. However, none of the PGs *DH* visited seemed to have followed the norm. Rooms were crammed with three or four beds, turning them into dormitories.

Shockingly, many PGs did not even have a proper name board or signs indicating that it was a PG. Residents said that many of them put up the name board only sometimes.

"They are already in a residential area and, on top of it, they also do not put up a name board many times to evade the police and local authorities checking them," said Chandra, a resident of Yelahanka.

Many PG inmates that *DH* spoke to expressed concerns and helplessness.

"If we want better facilities and security, the rent will go up drastically. I earn Rs 30,000 a month and it is impossible for me to spend Rs 10,000 on just a PG. Hence, I stick to the one I am staying at. Though we have to compromise on facilities, I only have to pay Rs 5,000, which is manageable," said Savitha K, a native of Hubbali.

Industry insiders said that many illegal PGs were operating and insisted on better enforcement by the authorities. Putting up signboards, appointing security guards, and getting a licence would increase the cost of operations, they said.

"We have been urging many PGs to get a licence and follow the set norms, but many of them still do not adhere to it. If they get a licence, their water bill, power bill, and property tax will go up significantly. Hence, many of them operate illegally. This is also a problem for many of us who adhere to all the norms since we cannot compete with their prices. The authorities should enforce the law more stringently," said Sukhi Seo, secretary of the Bangalore PG Owners' Association.

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) officials said that they are trying to enforce the norms and will soon conduct an enforcement drive.

The Bengaluru East City Corporation also recently published a public notice urging all PG owners to abide by the rules.

"It has come to the notice of the BECC that a large number of PGs are operating without the mandatory trade licence and in violation of established norms. These violations include, but are not limited to: operating in residential zones without permission, failure to provide basic safety and hygienic facilities, non-compliance with fire safety regulations, failure to install CCTV cameras as mandated, and many illegal PGs lack essential safety measures, leading to potential risks for public health," the notice noted.

Officials said that they had warned the PGs and would soon conduct an enforcement drive.

"We do not want to inconvenience the inmates by suddenly conducting a drive. Hence, we have given a public notice asking the PG owners to abide by it and the inmates to be prepared to leave such PGs," said Ramesh D S, Commissioner, Bengaluru East City Corporation.

Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said that they have a list of all the PGs and the officials keep a check on the safety measures.

"We do enforce the norms and our officers keep a check. If there are any lapses, we will check on them," he said.

DON'T SKIP THESE CHECKS

- CCTV camera for safety
- Security guard and a visitor log book
- Licence from Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA)
- FSSAI licence if food is provided

Despite housing working professionals and students, some PGs lack even a basic system to track visitors or restrict entry. DH PHOTO

Rave party busted on B'luru outskirts; 102 people tested

Party invites were sent via social media and messaging apps

BENGALURU, DHNS

Police on Saturday raided a rave party on the outskirts of Bengaluru, officials said. As many as 102 participants were at the spot, officials said, adding that they underwent a medical test (urine and blood) at a district hospital to ascertain if any narcotics were consumed.

Among those, 35 were women, while three were minor boys. "The average age of the adult participants was between 21 and 32. All were from Bengaluru and were students and working professionals, including some engineers," a senior officer told *DH*.

Based on a tip-off, investigators from the Kaggalipura station launched the search operations in the wee hours at the property near Devigere Cross, where the rave party was underway. R Srinivas Gowda, Superintendent of Police (SP), Bengaluru South district, oversaw the operation.

The party was reportedly well-organised, with invites sent via social media and messaging apps. A preliminary probe by the police revealed that a WhatsApp communique was sent to the participants to be shared among their close circles only.

"There was a WhatsApp group called Gen-Z. We suspect they used this and other social media platforms to spread the message, pay the entry fee, and book their spot. The location was shared at the last minute," another officer said.

Investigators recovered e-cigarettes, some stubs — unclear if they were normal cigarettes or ganja joints — and 10 grams of ganja.

"The ganja was thrown away, so we don't know who it belonged to. It was also learnt that alcohol was served to those below 21 years. All the recovered contraband was further sent for forensic analysis," the officer quoted previously said.

Superintendent of Police R Srinivas Gowda revealed that the organisers were detained for questioning.

"The property had no permission but operated as a homestay. The investigators have made certain recoveries that will be forensically analysed. Five people, including a woman, were the organisers. The owners were also at the spot during the raid. They have been questioned. Prima facie, looking at their social media, it appears such parties have happened previously. It will be verified," Gowda added.

Kaggalipura police registered the FIR under Sections 292 (punishment for public nuisance in cases not otherwise provided for) and 296 (obscene acts and songs) of BNS; 15A (consumption or allowing consumption of liquor in unlicensed public places) and 32 (penalty for illegal import, etc.) of the Excise Act; 37 (licensing use of loudspeakers) of the Karnataka Police Act; and relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

"Owners, organisers, and participants were named in the FIR. Notices were served," a police officer said.

PREVIOUS RAIDS

May 2025
Rave party busted at a farmhouse in Kannamangala village, Devanahalli

May 2024
CCB busts rave party at GR Farmhouse, near Electronic City

Police escort individuals for medical screening after raid.

With shorter gaps between trains, Yellow Line platforms see smoother flow during busy hours. DH FILE PHOTO

Relief for commuters as Yellow Line frequency improves

BENGALURU, DHNS: The improved frequency of trains on Namma Metro's Yellow Line has brought relief to regular commuters on the line.

Starting November 1, metro train services on the Yellow Line are running every 15 minutes during rush hour — from 8 am to 12 pm and 4 pm to 9 pm. The change in frequency has been attributed to the induction of the fifth train set on Saturday.

"Even if it is a mere few-minutes difference, the reduced wait time is a welcome change. So far, if you missed the train even by a minute, it had become a big nuisance, as the next train would come in only about 20 minutes. I've been avoiding the metro unless necessary because of this. But now I plan to use it more often," said Srinishi, a Banashankari resident and regular commuter.

On Saturday, up till 7 pm, the Yellow Line saw a ridership of about 27,500. "The ridership was low due to the Kannada Rajyotsava. We're hoping to see a big jump in the ridership on Monday. So far, the Yellow Line has been consistently crossing 1 lakh ridership every day," a senior BMRCL official told *DH*.

The 19.5-km metro line runs between RV Road and Bommasandra.

DKS defends GBA's move to dump waste at litterbugs' doorsteps

BENGALURU, DHNS

After many citizens criticised the government's move to dump garbage at the doorsteps of litterbugs, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday defended the move and said that it was being done to teach them a lesson.

"We have installed many CCTVs across the city. The litterers are being identified, and the garbage they dumped on the streets is being dumped back at their doorstep as a lesson. We are levying fines also on litterers," he said.

Addressing concerns over waste management in the city and garbage collection, he said that citizens can raise any concerns through complaints.

"It is not correct to say that garbage collection is not proper. Garbage is being collected every day. There are helpline numbers to call in case of discrepancies. We have also made provision for citizens to identify and report garbage dumping," he said.

He added that CCTV cameras are being installed in the city to monitor garbage dumping in public places.

Further, he said that the government was mulling adopting the Mumbai model for waste management.

"We have information that the contractors who manage main arterial roads are being given the job of garbage disposal in Mumbai. We are deliberating a similar model in Bengaluru too. I appeal to people to segregate the garbage and deliver it only to the vehicle which collects garbage," he said.

CCTV cameras will be installed at various black spots to monitor violations. DH FILE PHOTO

New asphalting technology

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar also said that a new asphalting technology, which improves the longevity of roads, may be followed in Bengaluru soon.

"We have learnt that many cities, including Hyderabad, are using new asphalting technologies to lay roads which last 10 years. We are discussing similar technologies for Bengaluru too," he said.

Air India launches daily flights from Bengaluru to Jodhpur, Udaipur

BENGALURU, DHNS: Air India Express launched new daily flights from Bengaluru to Jodhpur and Udaipur on Saturday.

From Bengaluru, the daily flight to Jodhpur is scheduled at 12.50 pm, while the return flight from Jodhpur to Bengaluru is scheduled at 4.45 pm. To Udaipur, the flight from Bengaluru will take off at 7.50 am, with the return flight from Udaipur scheduled at 10.40 am. The airline has also launched daily flights from both Udaipur and Jodhpur to Delhi.

City marks Kannada Rajyotsava with walks, tributes, and green pledges

BENGALURU, DHNS

The 70th Kannada Rajyotsava was celebrated with enthusiasm by government organisations and citizen-led groups alike. Here's how the city came together.

Rajyotsava celebrations in the city included the 'Rajyotsava Footpath Walk 11K'. This event was part of Project Walkaluru – a joint initiative of the GBA and citizens – with a mission to create a pedestrian-first, walkable Bengaluru. Over 75 citizens participated in the walk, both to enjoy the footpaths and to give an honest rating on how obstacle-free the footpaths were. The walk was flagged off by Maj Gen V T Mathew, GOC, Indian Army, Karnataka & Kerala Sub Area. Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner, GBA, joined the walk. The route started at Vidhana Soudha, headed east along Cubbon Road, wound its way to Halasuru Lake, passed through the green stretches of St John's Church Road, and then looped back via St John's Road, Commercial Street, and Infantry Road.

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) also celebrated Karnataka Rajyotsava with cultural fervour and a strong focus on community service and employee welfare at the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station (Majestic) on Saturday. The BMRCL Kannada Sangha launched a massive voluntary blood donation camp, which saw enthusiastic participation from BMRCL employees as well as commuters. Further enhancing employee welfare and promoting reading, the BMRCL Library, dedicated exclusively for the use of its staff, was formally inaugurated during the occasion.

To streamline governance and ensure improved service delivery across the city, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has been constituted, establishing five new city corporations, Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao announced on Friday. The announcement was made during the GBA's first-ever Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations held at the authority's premises. Rao, after hoisting the flag and offering floral tributes to "Nadadevi Bhuvaneshwari," highlighted the significance of the new authority's formation. He further stated that the GBA, working in close coordination with the newly established five city corporations, is committed to providing efficient and citizen-centric governance to the populace of Greater Bengaluru. In an address to the officials and staff gathered, he urged them to work actively and deliver quality public services.

Meanwhile, Prestige Group launched the 'Prestige Green Promise' on Karnataka Rajyotsava, committing to plant one million trees in Bengaluru.

Participants at the 'Rajyotsava Footpath Walk 11K' held in the city on Saturday.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Mini Karnataka Sports Meet-2025: CM Siddaramaiah, DK Shivakumar, Ramalinga Reddy, Rizwan Arshad, Karnataka Olympic Association: Kanteerava Indoor Stadium, Kasturba Road; 5 pm

37-day Literary-Cultural Festival: Gokulotsava-Flute Playing, HS Venugopal: Rashtroththan Sahitya: Keshavashilpa Hall, Rashtroththan Parishad Premises, Kempegowdanagar; 10 am

Hoysala Hustle-2025 Run Kick Off: Thawar Chand Gehlot: Nice Road; 6 am

Lalbagh Friendship Walk: organised by Bangalore Town Hall, venue: Lalbagh West Gate, 8.30 am

Lecture on 'Jupiter-King of the Planets and Its Family': BR Guruprasad: Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium; 4 pm

CULTURAL

'Taj Mahalina Tender' play: Dakshayin Bhat A; Drishya: Kalagrama, Mallattahalli; 7 pm

Hindustani Music Concert: Ravindra Soragavi : Band Stand, Cubbon Park; 7 am

32nd Annual Music Festival: Sangeetha Surabhi Award Presentation: Awardee TS Satyavati; Nadasurabhi: St. John's Medical College campus, Koramangala; 10 am

Invites to be published in this column should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain and thundershowers

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	30.1°C
Minimum	19.2°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	60%
Sunset (Nov 2)	5:53 pm
Sunrise (Nov 3)	6:13 am
Moonrise	2:38 pm
Moonset	1:56 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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Man killed by colleague in office after argument

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 41-year-old worker was killed by his co-worker over a trivial issue inside their office premises in Govindarajanagar police station limits on Friday night.

The deceased has been identified as Bhimesh Babu, a native of Vijayawada. The accused, Somala Vamshi, aged 24, was also working at Data Digital Bank in MC Layout.

According to the police, both were employed with Data Digital Bank, which also handled film shoots. They used to stay overnight in the company premises regularly.

Around 1.30 a.m., a fight broke out between the two over the issue of switching off the light. The argument escalated and later turned violent. In a fit of rage, Vamshi allegedly attacked Babu on the head with a dumbbell, killing him on the spot.

After realising that Babu had died, the accused walked into Govindarajanagar Police Station to surrender and narrated the incident. A case has been registered, and further investigations are underway.

Activists call for end to animal cruelty

BENGALURU, DHNS: On the occasion of World Vegan Day, over 50 animal rights activists marched through AECS Layout, Bengaluru, to raise awareness about the everyday abuse of animals and call for an end to animal cruelty by advocating a shift toward veganism.

The event, organised by the Bengaluru Brigade for Animal Liberation (BBAL), engaged the public through creative and peaceful activism along the 5-km route.

Through impactful conversations, activists spoke about the hidden suffering behind products such as meat, milk, eggs, leather, silk, and animal-tested cosmetics, urging people to make choices that align with their values of kindness and justice.

Garment workers highlight severe health and nutritional gaps

BENGALURU, DHNS

Nearly 350 garment workers, predominantly women, gathered at the Kondajji Basappa auditorium in Bengaluru on Saturday to submit a memorandum to industry stakeholders and civil society leaders, demanding immediate provisions for free nutritious lunches and significant improvements to workplace conditions across Bengaluru's factories

The gathering, under the banner of 'Garments Karmikara Mahasangama', was organised by the Munnade Social Organisation in collaboration with Cividep India. The workers highlighted severe health and nutritional gaps within their workforce.

The urgent call for action was grounded in findings from a recent Cividep India study on 'Dietary Diversity and Possible Nutrition Status'. The research indicated that most workers had only a moderate diet quality, with limited consumption of green leafy vegetables, fruits, and protein-rich foods, leading to likely micronutrient deficiencies such as iron and folate gaps. Long working hours and low wages were cited as major contributing factors to this nutritional deficit.

During the event, workers from various city factories collectively voiced their socio-economic and health concerns, pressing for concrete steps to enhance safety and dignity at the workplace. The memorandum called for not only the provision of free, healthy meals but also the urgent upgrading of canteen facilities and ensuring access to safe drinking water.

The event saw participation from prominent individuals who extended their support, including PGR Sindhia, Chief Commissioner of Bharath Scouts and Guides, film actress Umashree and Independent Counsellor Tara. Yashodha PH, Executive Director of the Munnade Social Organisation, was also present.

Quick commerce delivery agents face scrutiny as police plan safeguards

Cops push for background checks, data logs

DH SPECIAL

MANJUNATH SHETTAR & ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Over the past few years, Bengaluru has witnessed a worrying pattern of crimes involving quick commerce delivery agents. In an attempt to rein in the largely unorganised sector, the Bengaluru City Police is contemplating segregating and documenting incidents involving gig workers.

Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh has ordered a station-wise review and compilation of registered cases involving delivery agents, with a focus on crimes against women.

The recent case of a Brazilian model being allegedly molested by a delivery agent at her apartment raised concerns over the safety risks involved while using quick commerce platforms. The accused, a 21-year-old diploma engineering student, was later arrested by RT Nagar police and remanded in judicial custody.

Speaking to *DH*, Seemant Kumar Singh emphasised the importance of background verification before hiring delivery agents. "Verification is important in cases of cross-employment, where a worker leaves one organisation to immediately join another," said Singh, adding that verification of the employee's work history and police records will soon be made mandatory on quick commerce platforms.

For those working round the clock, companies have been asked to maintain proper safety setups, including GPS-based delivery tracking, area-wise delivery logs, and the employee's active contact number. "This is a fairly new employment sector and the numbers are growing by the day. Documentation is imperative. What we've noticed is that delivery agents are often using vehicles that are not registered in their names. The concerned organisations need to take onus, and these things need to be looked into. We plan to crack down on these issues," said Kuldeep Kumar Jain, Joint Commissioner of Police (Administration).

Bengaluru police is drafting SOPs for quick commerce firms to follow for delivery staff onboarding. DH FILE PHOTO

Verification process

Most quick commerce companies depend on third-party organisations for background verification, shared an industry insider. "However, it is often not a detailed background check and just covers the basics," he added.

Sharing details about the hiring and verification process at Zomato and Blinkit, a spokesperson said, "Before onboarding, every delivery partner undergoes a comprehensive background verification process conducted by independent background-screening partners, including detailed checks of eCourt and criminal records to ensure no serious offences are associated with the individual. They must also meet essential requirements such as possessing a verified government-recognised ID, a valid bank account, and two-wheeler riding proficiency. Beyond these requirements, our systems are designed to detect impersonation attempts or fake documentation, and once verification is complete, delivery partners receive extensive training on delivery protocols, safety, and hygiene standards to ensure they are fully prepared to operate on our platforms." Additionally, post-onboarding, regular monitoring is conducted, they said.

However, the reality on ground remains different. To join a quick commerce platform as a delivery agent, all the documentation that is required is a valid government ID such as an Aadhaar card for address proof and a driver's license.

"Once you download the app meant for delivery agents and provide these two documents, you're almost immediately onboard. It's an instant sign-up process. They use the Aadhaar card to check whether I have previously worked on the platform and if I've been blacklisted. Apart from that, once you are online on the platform, you are asked for a selfie at a random point during the day to verify the individual and check if the agent is wearing the appropriate uniform," explained Rajesh (name changed), who attempted food delivery service on Zomato as a part-time job last year.

Gig workers work on a 'to each their own' principle, with little to no interaction with company officials on a daily basis, delivery agents told *DH*. Vinay Sarathi, president of United Food Delivery Partners' Union, highlighted the need for quick commerce platforms to proactively take accountability for the safety of both female delivery agents and customers.

Reject mini-hydel project in Western Ghats: Activist to Forest Dept

BENGALURU, DHNS

Over 15 years after the state government was taken to the High Court over mini-hydel projects in the Western Ghats, a Hassan-based company has submitted a proposal to set up a 10-MW power project across the Kumaradhara river at Somwarpet.

Wildlife conservationist Giridhar Kulkarni has written to Forest Department officers at the divisional and circle levels, requesting them to reject the proposal. The plant is proposed in the Madikeri territorial division, a region already under pressure from multiple development projects.

"The area proposed for the project lies in close proximity to Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, which is an important elephant habitat and home to several species listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The proposed project site is located approximately 2.5 km from the sanctuary's boundary and appears to fall within its Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ), as notified on 28th June 2017," he said.

Kulkarni also noted that the Forest Department and the state government had submitted an affidavit in WP 9333 of 2009 before the Karnataka High Court, stating that no new mini-hydel projects would be permitted. About 10 such projects were cancelled following the judgment, he said.

"Any new mini-hydel project in the Western Ghats would be in violation of the commitment made before the court," he added, urging officials to reject the proposal.

Bengaluru Skill Summit from November 4 to 6

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka Skill Development Corporation (KSDC), in collaboration with the Karnataka Skill Development Authority (KSDA), Knowledge Partner Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), and Country Partner Germany, is hosting the inaugural edition of the Bengaluru Skill Summit from November 4 to 6 at The Lalit Ashok.

The theme for this year is 'Workforce 2030: Scale, Systems, Synergy' and focuses on expanding opportunities at scale, strengthening systems for quality and relevance, and building synergies among various stakeholders.

The summit will host over 3,000 attendees, including policymakers, corporate leaders, academic experts, and innovators; 100+ speakers, including ministers, global leaders, and academic pioneers; and 50+ exhibitors and partners.

Seven transgenders arrested for assaulting gang member

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bommanahalli police on Saturday arrested a gang of seven transgenders for allegedly assaulting one of their own associates over personal rivalry.

Police said the gang, led by Preeti and Chinni, allegedly picked up Sukanya, a trans woman, from KR Puram in an autorickshaw and brought her to Bommanahalli, where they tonsured her head and brutally assaulted her using rolling pins and other objects after she joined another group, which enraged them. Despite Sukanya pleading for mercy, the gang continued the assault.

The accused also made a video call to another trans woman while carrying out the attack, and the video went viral on Friday. Following this, Bommanahalli police arrested seven trans women in connection with the assault. Further investigations are underway.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. CN/01/2025
Dated : 27.10.2025

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.

Tender No.	Name of work
95255248	3 Core x 400 sq mm 6.35/11 kv Grade 90 Deg, C rating heavy duty power cable, Stranded Aluminium Conductor Armoured XLPE insulated. Cable should be as per IS 7098 Part-II etc. **Qty : 8900 mtrs.**

Last date for Submission of bids :
Upto 10.30 hrs on 21.11.2025
For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Deputy Chief Material Manager, Construction, Bengaluru Cantonment

PUB/605/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE No. 22/2025/SBC Dated 29.10.2025.

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Description in brief	Qty.
Tender No. L8256169B, "Supply of class 4 hand gloves with 36kv working voltage as per IEC 60903:2014/IS 13774:2021 (rev-2)"	1665 Pairs

Last Date for Submission of Tender :
Upto 10:30 Hrs. on 24.11.2025
For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Senior Divisional Material Manager Bengaluru

PUB/598/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Publication of E-Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/152/2025 Dated: 27-10-2025

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Construction of Road Under Bridge (2x5.50x4.50) RCC box in lieu of LC No. 148 at km:217/800-900 and Road Under Bridge (2x5.5x4.5) RCC box in lieu of LC No.152 at Km :219/600-700 between Hebbal and Lottegollahalli Station -Construction of Contiguous Piles wall (Balance Portion) for RUB Approaches at LC 152 & 148. **(Tender Ref. No. YPR-CSDR-DL-06)**	**Rs. 8,59,49,289/-**

Date of closing of Tender is :
Upto 15:00 hrs on 18-11-2025
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/Works Bengaluru Cantonment

PUB/593/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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Govt. of Jharkhand
Directorate of Culture
(Dept. of Tourism, Art Culture, Sports & Youth Affairs)
MDI Building, 3rd Floor, Dhurwa, Ranchi-4
Ph.-0651-2401917, E-mail: dirjharkhandculture@gmail.com

Very Short Tender Notice :-

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) REGARDING SELECTION OF EVENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY FOR WORKS RELATED TO CULTURAL EVENT PROPOSED ON FOUNDATION DAY PROGRAMME TO BE HELD AT RANCHI, JHARKHAND ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2025

Ref. No.- 515 **Date :- 01/11/2025**

Directorate of Culture (Dept. of Tourism, Art Culture, Sports & Youth Affairs), Govt. of Jharkhand, Ranchi intends to issue this Request for Proposal (RFP) regarding selection of Event Management Agency for works related to Cultural Event proposed on FOUNDATION DAY PROGRAMME to be held at Ranchi, Jharkhand on 16th November 2025.

Proposals are invited from reputed and experienced agency. RFP document can be downloaded from the website http://jharkhandculture.com

Proposals completed in all respect, shall be submitted at the address mentioned in RFP on or before 11.30 hrs. of 07.11.2025

Corrigendum, Addendum if any shall be uploaded in the above stated website only and shall not be published in the newspapers.

Directorate of Culture reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and annul this process at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Sd/-
Director Culture
Directorate of Culture, Jharkhand. Ranchi

PR 365091 Tourism, Art Culture Sports And Youth Affairs (25-26).D

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

PALAKKAD DIVISION

E - TENDER NOTICE No. PGT/OT/22/2025 Dated: 30.10.2025

For and on behalf of the President of India, The Senior Divisional Engineer / Co-ordination / Southern Railway / Palakkad invites E-TENDERS for the following works:

Sl. No.	Name of the works	Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs	Bid Security Amount (₹)	Tender closing date on **15.00 hrs**	Completion Period in Months
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Preliminary Civil engineering Site Preparation works for 11kV/433V Substation in connection with the work: Improvements to Thalassery Railway Station (NSG-3) under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (Phase I).	**35.00**	**70,000/-**	**21.11.2025**	**Nine**
2	Palakkad Division - Provision of AMC for GSM based Automatic water level monitoring system installed on Br. Nos. 847, 867, 873, 1047, 1116, 1130, 1162, 1220 & 1274 (Total 9 Nos)	**41.56**	**83,100/-**	**21.11.2025**	**Thirty Six**
3	West Hill: Extension of exg. shunting neck to 400m length at WH station	**99.05**	**1,98,100/-**	**21.11.2025**	**Nine**
4	Podanur - Shoranur & Shoranur - Quilandi section: Provision of Electrically operated Lifting Barrier at Level crossings at Podanur - Shoranur & Shoranur - Quilandy section of Palakkad Division (Civil Engineering Portion) - Construction of S&T Hut at Various locations.	**118.34**	**2,09,200/-**	**01.12.2025**	**Ten**
5	Quilandy - Kannur section : Provision of Electrically operated Lifting Barrier at Level crossings in Quilandy - Kannur section of Palakkad Division - Construction of S&T Hut at Various locations.	**118.34**	**2,09,200/-**	**01.12.2025**	**Twelve**
6	Divisional Engineer / East jurisdiction - Repairs to Steel Girder bridges in PGT & SRR Sub Division - Renewal of corroded / worn out rivets and structural steel members and replacement of bed plates.	**77.37**	**1,54,800/-**	**21.11.2025**	**Six**
7	Assistant Divisional Engineer / Kannur - Sub Division - Repairs to PF fencing wall at Nadapuram Road, Etakkot, Kannur South, Valappattanam, Kannapuram & Payangadi.	**224.71**	**2,62,400/-**	**01.12.2025**	**Twelve**
8	Kannur - General maintenance and up keeping of Officers Rest House and Sub Ordinate Rest House at Kannur for a period of 24-months	**17.23**	**34,500/-**	**21.11.2025**	**Twenty Four**

1. All the contracts on Works / goods / services will be subject to the new GST Act as applicable from time to time.
2. Contractors / Suppliers have to register themselves with GST authorities and to furnish the GST registration number in order to process the bills from 01.07.2017 onwards.
3. For complete details of the above tenders please visit Website **https://www.ireps.gov.in**

Note: It is the responsibility of the Tenderer to check any corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website; the same shall be taken into account while submitting Tender.

Senior Divisional Engineer / West / Palakkad

सत्यमेव जयते

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT

announces

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SCHEDULED CASTE

students to pursue Higher Education under the

Post-Matric Scholarships Scheme for SC students for the Year 2025-26

ELIGIBILITY

- Parents' / Guardians' annual income not exceeding **Rs. 2.50 Lakh**
- Students pursuing courses in recognised Institutions/Universities /Colleges/ Schools

SCOPE

- All recognised courses from class **XI** onwards
- Applications are accepted and verified by the State Government /Union Territory
- Coverage of the poorest households

ENTITLEMENT

- Compulsory **non-refundable fees** (including tuition fee)
- Academic allowance ranging from **Rs. 2500 to Rs. 13500** per annum
- **10%** extra allowance for Divyang (specially abled) students

- Student should have a valid **Mobile Number, Aadhaar Number (UID), Aadhaar seeded Bank Account, Income Certificate, Previous year Marksheet and Caste Certificate.**

- Scheme guidelines and detailed eligibility criteria available on below mentioned link:

https://socialjustice.gov.in/schemes/25

Scan QR Code for Scheme Guidelines

CBC 38101/11/0026/2526

Internal quota Bill to be introduced in winter session: Minister

BAGALKOT, DHNS: The state government will introduce a Bill to implement the internal reservation among Scheduled Communities during the winter session of the legislature, Excise and Bagalkot District Minister R B Thimmapur said on Saturday

The report on internal quota for SCs was accepted during the Cabinet meeting in August. The Cabinet then was in favour of implementing it through ordinance route. But later it was dropped fearing legal hurdles. The government has now decided to get the Bill passed in the winter session to provide legal backing, the minister told reporters here. The nomadic communities have sought a separate 1% internal reservation. The chief minister has assured them of doing social justice, he said. The government has relaxed the age limit for job aspirants due to inordinate delay in recruitment. The process will be initiated soon, he said.

RDPR grant to birthplaces of Jnanpith & Bharat Ratna recipients

KALABURAGI, DHNS: Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge said on Saturday that his department will release Rs 1 crore grant each for the development of the birthplaces of Jnanpith awardees and Bharat Ratna recipients who have contributed to the country by promoting the Kannada language at the national and international levels.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that the funds will be released to undertake development works at birthplaces of Jnanpith awardees Kuvempu, Da Ra Bendre, Shivaram Karanth, Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, V K Gokak, U R Ananthamurthy, Girish Karnad and Chandrashekhar Kambar.

Development works will also be taken up at the birthplaces of Bharat Ratna recipients Sir M Visvesvaraya and Bhimsen Joshi. Priyank, who also holds IT-BT portfolio, said that the department will provide Rs 1 crore to Bharat Ratna recipient scientist C N R Rao's home city of Bengaluru and works will be carried out in 2-3 months.

Belagavi soaks in Rajyotsava spirit; MES holds rally despite curbs

'Leaders to be booked for holding 'black day' rally sans permission'

BELAGAVI, DHNS

Grand procession, music, dance and sloganeering marked the 70th Rajyotsava celebrations in Belagavi. Over five lakh people gathered at the Rani Chennamma Circle to showcase Kannada pride and unity.

The celebrations started from Friday midnight and went on till Saturday midnight. After District Minister Satish Jarkiholi formally inaugurated Rajyotsava celebrations by garlanding a statue of Rani Chennamma, huge crowds, mostly young people in Kannada colours - yellow and red, gathered at the circle and danced to iconic Kannada numbers.

Children dressed up as famous personalities in history, literature and tableaux depicting Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, Rani Chennamma, Abbakka Devi, Immadi Pulikeshi, Krishna, Hampi stone chariot, Halasi temple and Operation Sindoor, added colour to the celebrations.

Meanwhile, leaders and activists of Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES), wearing black shirts, took out a black day rally in the city. They went ahead with the rally despite the district administration denying permission. They raised the sloigan 'Samyukta Maharashtra Jhalach Pahije' (merger of Belagavi, Nippani, Bidar, Karwar with Maharashtra must happen).

MES leaders Manohar Kinekar, Ramakanth Konduskar, Prakash Shirolkar, Sarita Patil and Renu Killekar led the rally.

Interestingly, Belagavi Mahanagara Palike member Vaishali Bhatkande, who has identified herself with Congress, also took part in the rally.

The police detained more than 20 MES activists after they tried to barge into Maratha Mandir. The protesters were released later.

The MES has been demanding merger of several Marathi-speaking areas and villages, including Belagavi, Nippani, Khanapur, Karwar, Bidar, Bhalki, with Maharashtra.

Karnataka, however, maintains that the demarcation done on linguistic lines as per States Reorganisation Act and 1967 Mahajan commission report is final.

A huge crowd takes part in the procession taken out to mark Kannada Rajyotsava in Belagavi on Saturday. DH PHOTO/EKNATH AGASIMANI

Maha MP, Sena activists stopped at border, sent back

The Nippani police prevented Maharashtra MP Dhairyashil Mane, Shiv Sena (Uddhav faction), Kolhapur district president Vijay Devane and scores of MES and Sena activists from entering Belagavi to take part in black day rally on Saturday.

The police stopped them at the Koganoli checkpost in Nippani taluk and sent them back.

Action against PI for taking selfie with MES leader: HM

Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Saturday that disciplinary action would be taken against the Police Inspector (PI) of Malmaruti police station in Belagavi for taking a selfie with MES leader Shubham Shelke, reports DHNS from Tumakuru.

The police inspector's act went viral on social media, triggering a strong criticism from Kannada activists.

"Disciplinary action will be taken against the officers who act against the interests of Kannada and Karnataka. We will not compromise on the language, land and water issues. However, just because he (PI) took a selfie with the MES leader doesn't make him anti-Kannada," the minister told reporters in the city on Saturday.

5 stabbed during procession

Five persons participating in the Rajyotsava procession were stabbed at Sadashivnagar on Saturday night, reports DHNS from Belagavi. The injured have been admitted at Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences district hospital for treatment. Miscreants stabbed Gurunath Vakkund, Sachin Kamble, Lokesh, Vinayak and Nazir during and fled. The police are investigating.

Police detain Kalyana Karnataka separate statehood awareness committee president M S Patil Naribol, who tried to hoist the Kalyana Karnataka 'separate statehood' flag during Karnataka Rajyotsava celebrations in Kalaburagi on Saturday. DH PHOTO/TAJUDDIN AZAD

Police detain activists over bid to hoist 'separate state' flag in Kalaburagi

KALABURAGI, DHNS

Police detained activists, including Kalyana Karnataka separate statehood awareness committee president M S Patil Naribol, who tried to hoist the Kalyana Karnataka 'separate statehood' flag during Karnataka Rajyotsava celebrations here on Saturday.

The committee's office-bearers and leaders had staged a dharna at Jagat Circle here on Friday.

They took out a procession displaying the separate state flag near Basavanna statue and raised slogans demanding separate statehood, accusing the government of being responsible for the backwardness of the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Naribol charged that only the name of the region had been changed, but it lagged behind in terms of development.

Noting that the government was meting out step-motherly treatment to the region, he said that the special status accorded to the region through amendment of Article 371(J) of the Constitution was not being implemented properly. Therefore, separate statehood was inevitable, if this region had to be developed, he said.

No lobbying, panel had final say in choice of awardees: CM

It ensured regional representation, social justice, says Siddu

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday asserted that he had not recommended any individual for the annual Kannada Rajyotsava awards, clarifying that the final selection of the 70 achievers was entirely that of the designated committee.

Speaking after inaugurating the 70th Karnataka Rajyotsava event organised by the Kannada and culture department at Ravindra Kalakshetra, the CM said 70 achievers were chosen to mark the 70th anniversary of the formation of Karnataka.

The primary goal, he said, was to identify and select only the distinguished in the respective fields, irrespective of who had applied.

Awardees to increase by one each year

"There are still many achievers among us. But since we have made a rule that awards should be given equal to the number of years since the state's formation. So, 70 achievers have been recognized this time. Next year, 71 will be considered. Personalities from all communities, constituencies and districts have been considered. Real achievers have been recognized without inviting applications," the deputy chief minister said.

He said the committee ensured regional representation and social justice, particularly when multiple deserving names surfaced in same category.

The CM said, "the media did not dispute anyone's selection," which he took as confirmation that only the most deserving individuals had received the honours.

He paid a special tribute to awardee Konandur Lingappa, recalling their shared history in socialist struggle.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, in his speech, expressed profound pride in the opportunity to felicitate the awardees. Quoting a verse by Purandara Dasa, he said, "It is my fortune (Bhagya) to facilitate all of you today".

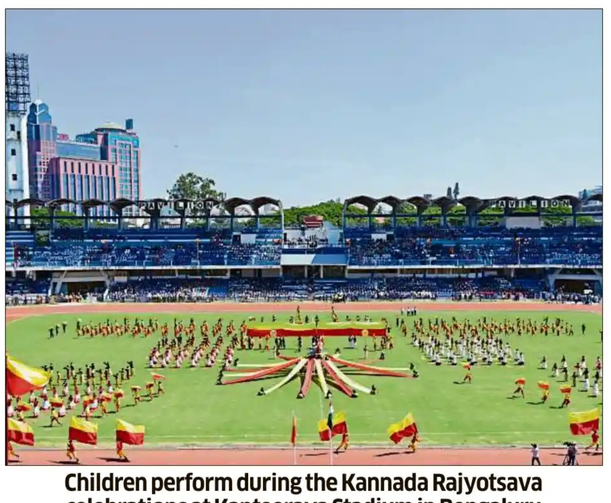
Shivakumar highlighted the modest background of many recipients. "Many among the awardees hadn't seen Bengaluru all this while. But they have achieved and contributed to the state," he remarked, calling their lives an inspiration to all.

"Wealth is temporary. Your achievements will be permanent," he said.

The deputy CM also recalled Konandur Lingappa, mentioning his political prowess alongside Bangarappa and Kagodu Thimmappa. "The Assembly used to shake at their mere presence," Shivakumar said.

Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj Thangadagi and others were present at the event.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with 70 achievers conferred with Kannada Rajyotsava award to mark 70th statehood day, in Bengaluru on Saturday. Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and Minister Shivaraj S Tangadagi are seen. DH PHOTO/M S MANJUNATH



Children perform during the Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations at Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Belagavi is integral part of Karnataka, reiterates Siddu

BENGALURU, PTI: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday asserted that Belagavi is an integral part of Karnataka and will never be allowed to merge with Maharashtra. The chief minister also said that Mahajan Committee report on the Karnataka-Maharashtra border dispute is final.

"There will be no compromise on the Belagavi issue. The Maharashtra government has approached the Supreme Court on the issue but the Mahajan report is final. We will not let go of Belagavi because it is Kannada land and a part of Karnataka. No one can deny this," he said.

"The MES people are also Kannadigas. If anyone among them indulges in rowdyism, we will deal with them firmly," the CM said. He told the Kannada activists that the government is ready to do whatever is necessary for the development of Kannada schools in border areas.

Hailing the Kannada activists for their struggle to protect the interests of the state, Siddaramaiah assured them that cases registered against them for pro-Kannada agitations would be withdrawn.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE No. B/TRD/220/ 25-26 Dt: 29.10.2025

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Item of work	Approx. Value
Hiring of vehicles for Assistant Divisional Electrical Engineer/ TRD Hindupur (HUP) and Tiruppachetti (TPC) for 14 months	₹18,72,958.08/-

Last Date for Submission of bids: **Upto 16:00 Hrs. on 20.11.2025**

For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD/ Bengaluru
PUB/606/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. 21/2025/SBC Dated: 24-10-2025

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders through IREPS only for supply of following items:

Sl	Tender No	Description in Brief	Tender Due on
1	L8255384B	Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Compressed air pipeline Qty- 01 Set.	24-11-2025 10:30 Hrs.
2	L8256690	Spares of CUMMINS Qty- 29 Nos.	

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

PUB/586/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26 **Senior Divisional Materials Manager, Bengaluru**

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RAJENDRA SINHJI ARMY OFFICERS' INSTITUTE
(HQ K K Sub Area Officers Mess Annexe)
 # 50 MG Road, Bangalore – 560 001

CALL FOR QUOTATION : NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

QUOTATIONS ARE INVITED FROM REPUTED EVENT ORGANISERS FOR CONDUCTING **"NEW YEAR CELEBRATION"** AT RSAOI BANGALORE ON 31 DEC 2025 (WED). DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT **https://rsaoibangalore.in/ download.**

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

SALEM DIVISION

E-TENDER NOTICE No. SA-E8-2025-26-W1-W3, Dated: 24.10.2025
SA-E8-2025-26-W4-W6, Dated: 30.10.2025

Divisional Railway Manager / Electrical / Salem Division, Salem - 5 for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tender for the under mentioned works. Online bids only will be accepted. For detailed NIT, qualification criteria, bidding document, tender submission etc. can be viewed / downloaded from website portal **www.ireps.gov.in**

E-Tender Notice No, Date and Name of Work	Details
1) SA-E8-2025-26-W1 Dated: 24.10.2025 Improvement to Station building. Platform Shelter and Platform Surface in NSG-6 Stations in Salem (SA) and Attur (ATU) section over Salem Division - Electrical Arrangements.	Approx. Cost - ₹ 55,23,289.00/- EMD - ₹ 1,10,500.00/- Completion Period - 6 Months
2) SA-E8-2025-26-W2 Dated: 24.10.2025 Improvement to Station building. Platform Shelter and Platform Surface in NSG-6 Stations in Erode (ED), Karur (KRR) Coimbatore (CBE) and Mettupalayam (MTP) over Salem Division - Electrical Arrangements.	Approx. Cost - ₹ 56,37,654.00/- EMD - ₹ 1,12,800.00/- Completion Period - 6 Months
3) SA-E8-2025-26-W3 Dated: 24.10.2025 Salem Division - Proposed repairs to water Distribution system, Construction of OHT-50000 Litres capacity and Individual storage water tank at Staff Quarters Podanur - Electrical Arrangements.	Approx. Cost - ₹ 8,55,504.00/- EMD - ₹ 17,100.00/- Completion Period - 6 Months
For all the works Closing Time & Date	15.00 hrs. on 18.11.2025
For all the works Bids Opening Time & Date	15.30 hrs. on 18.11.2025
4) SA-E8-2025-26-W4 Dated: 30.10.2025 Salem Division - Proposed collection well with pump room in Road Under Bridge (RUB)-10 nos in Namakkal - Karur Section - Electrical Arrangements.	Approx. Cost - ₹ 6,26,486.00/- EMD - ₹ 12,500.00/- Completion Period - 6 Months
5) SA-E8-2025-26-W5 Dated: 30.10.2025 Salem Division - Proposed collection well with pump room in Road Under Bridge (RUB)-15 nos in Salem - Namakkal Section - Electrical Arrangements.	Approx. Cost - ₹ 14,10,370.00/- EMD - ₹ 28,200.00/- Completion Period - 6 Months
6) SA-E8-2025-26-W6 Dated: 30.10.2025 Salem Division - Outsourcing of Schedule Maintenance of TL (Train Lighting) & AC (Air conditioned) LHB and SG Coaches at SSE/E/TL&AC/Erode Depot for a period of three years.	Approx. Cost - ₹ 2,92,21,697.75/- EMD - ₹ 2,96,100.00/- Completion Period - 36 Months Tender booklet cost: ₹ 5900/-
For all the works Closing Time & Date	15.00 hrs. on 21.11.2025
For all the works Bids Opening Time & Date	15.30 hrs. on 21.11.2025

All Addendum / Corrigendum, Time extension, Clarifications, etc. will be uploaded in the website portal **www.ireps.gov.in** only and will not be published separately in Newspapers. Bidders should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.

Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical) Salem

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. 24/SBC/25 of 23.10.2025 Through E-tendering

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.

Sl.No.	Item of Work	Approx.Value
1.	Senior Divisional Engineer/East/Bengaluru Section: Proposed Construction of new pit line with covered shed and renovation of existing pit line in AC Loco Trip Shed at Satellite Goods Terminal (SGT). Maintenance period is 12 months. (Composite Tender).	Rs. 3,56,68,076
2.	Yelahanka - Bangarpet section: Proposed renovation of station building, improvements to circulating area, approach road and construction of boundary wall at Thurandahalli (TUHD) station in Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Bangarapete sub division. Maintenance period is 6 months. (Composite Tender)	Rs. 1,53,23,105
3.	Senior Divisional Engineer/East/Section:: KJM Diesel Shed: Proposed digging of 4 new open wells and rejuvenation of existing well behind control room at Krishnarajapuram Diesel Shed for rain water harvesting. Maintenance period is 6 months.	Rs. 50,20,900
4.	Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Bengaluru: Proposed construction of TTE Rest Room (for 33 beds) including dining at 2nd entry building (2nd floor) (30x15=450sqm). Maintenance period is 12 months. (Composite Tender)	Rs. 1,35,16,581
5.	Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Bengaluru: Construction of new AC Loco Trip Shed. Maintenance period is 12 months. (Composite Tender)	Rs. 3,06,48,530
6.	Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Bengaluru: Construction of new building for Divisional Staff Canteen 15m x 12m (G+2 Floors). Maintenance period is 12 months. (Composite Tender)	Rs. 1,63,73,391

Last date for Submission of bids : **Upto 15.00 hrs on 17.11.2025**

For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Senior Divisional Engineer/Co-Ordination/ Bengaluru
PUB/601/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमण्डल, रामगढ़
रामगढ़ थाना के सामने, गांधी चौक, रामगढ़ कैन्ट, जिला– रामगढ़, झारखण्ड– 829122, ई-मेल– **eercdramgarh-jhr@nic.in**

एस०बी०डी० आधारित अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना
ई–निविदा प्रसंग संख्या :– **RCD/RAMGARH/ 1064 /2025-26**
दिनांक :– **29-10-2025**

1.	कार्य का नाम	IRQP Work of Badki Pona to Kulhi Road from KM 0.00 to 13.85 KM (Total Length - 13.85 KM) Under Road Divison, Ramgarh for the of Year 2025-26
2.	प्राक्कलित राशि (रूपये में)	रुपये 7,82,50,000.00 (सात करोड़ बयासी लाख पचास हजार) मात्र
3.	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि	06(छः) माह
4.	वेबसाईट पर निविदा प्रकाशित होने की तिथि एवं समय	14/11/2025 03:00 बजे अपराह्न
5.	निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	22/11/2025 12:00 बजे दिन तक
6.	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता	कार्यपालक अभियंता, पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमण्डल, रामगढ़
7.	प्रोक्योरमेंट पदाधिकारी का सम्पर्क नंबर	98351–25637
8.	ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट सेल का हेल्प लाईन नंबर	0651–2401010

- निविदा की अन्य शर्ते वेबसाइट http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है।
- पथ निर्माण विभाग, झारखण्ड में निबंधित निविदाकारों को **UCAN** से संबंधित प्रमाण पत्र की छायाप्रति संलग्न करना अनिवार्य है।
- निविदा की राशि घट–बढ़ सकती है।
- **Cost of bidding document (Non-refundable fee) & Bid Security as indicated shall be payable online through** http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in.

कार्यपालक अभियंता
PR 365006 (Road)25-26*D प०नि०वि० पथ प्रमण्डल रामगढ़

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमंडल, जामताड़ा
अल्पकालीन ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट सूचना सं0–02/2025–26
ई–निविदा प्रसंग–RCD/JAMTARA/950/25-26
दिनांक 30.10.2025

1	कार्य का नाम	IRQP Wo rk of Giridih - Gandey-Pandeydih road (MDR-089) from Km 35.00 to Km 42.580 (Total length -7.580 Km) for the Year 2025-26
2	प्राक्कलित राशि	रू0 707.19800 लाख (सात करोड़ सात लाख उन्नीस हजार आठ सौ रूपये)
3.	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	03 (तीन) महीना
4.	ई–निविदा प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि एंव समय	19.11.2025 के दोपहर 12:00 बजे तक
5	ई–निविदा का वेबसाईट पर प्रकाशन की तिथि एंव समय	06.11.2025 के अपराहन 4:30 बजे से
6.	ई–निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले कार्यालय का नाम एंव पता	कार्यपालक अभिंयता, पथ प्रमंडल, जामताड़ा।
7.	ई–प्रोक्यूरमेंट अधिकारी का संपर्क नं0/मोबाईल नं0	9279626462
8.	ई–प्रोक्यूरमेंट सेल का संपर्क सहायता नम्बर	**0651-2401010**

नोटः– प्राक्कलित राशि घट–बढ़ सकती हैं।
निविदा संबंधी अन्य जानकारी http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता ,
पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमंडल, जामताड़ा
PR 365017 Road(25-26)D

THE SCEPTICAL SKIP HC order, middle-class antipathy hit exercise in state capital

Survey: 'Apathetic' Bengaluru drags down state numbers

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS:

Nearly 60% of the households that refused to participate in the Social and Educational Survey were from Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) area, possibly revealing urban or middle-class bias against the exercise.

There were other reasons too for the less coverage in the state capital.

As per official data from the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, 2.5 lakh of the total 4.22 lakh households (59.34%) that rejected the survey statewide were from GBA limits.

As many as 6.75 lakh houses in GBA limits were locked, 2.42 lakh were vacant, 7.64 lakh UHIDs were those of commercial establishments, 32,347 households were those of migrants, 2.28 lakh households had completed their enumeration in their native places, while there were 1.64 lakh UHIDs created for borewell pumpsets, but had no houses attached.

As many as 2.53 lakh households had been enumerated via duplication of UHIDs, while other families accounted for 3.57 lakh households.

Successful in RoK

Barring GBA limits, the survey witnessed a high enumeration figure of 97.5% (5.54 crore enumerated out of the estimated population of 5.68 crore) across the state.

However, merely 59.07 lakh out of an estimated 1.16 crore estimated population was enumerated in Bengaluru, bringing down the state average to 89.48%.

This is lesser than the 94.2% enumeration (5.98 crore out of the estimated 6.35 crore were enumerated) during the previous survey in 2015 that was overseen by the H Kantharaj-led backward classes commission.

The 2015 survey was junked following opposition by various communities, especially the 'dominant' Lingayats and Vokkaligas.

Why survey lagged in GBA?

First, the survey began late in GBA limits. Though it started across the state (including areas of Bengaluru urban district that don't come under GBA) on September 22, it began in GBA limits only on October 4.

The late start was attributed to the delayed training of enumerators and other administrative hurdles.

Secondly, and more importantly, the High Court's direction to not make the survey mandatory emboldened opponents of the exercise, who gave public calls for opposing it.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and Bangalore South BJP MP Tejasvi Surya said they would not participate in the survey.

Rajya Sabha member Sudha Murty and her husband, Infosys founder Narayana Murthy, refused to participate, saying they didn't belong to backward classes.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar got enumerated in full media view, and ended up criticising the survey for asking 'too many' questions, some of which he refused to answer. This could have influenced many to either skip the survey or be desultory towards it.

Former Backward Classes Commission member K N Lingappa felt the state government should have filed a review petition in the High Court for withdrawal of riders imposed.

"If even that didn't work in their favour, they could have approached the Supreme Court with a special leave petition," he said.

A senior official explained that though enumerators visited houses multiple times in GBA limits, certain sections of the society were not interested in the survey and refused to participate.

The official highlighted the high migrant population in Bengaluru and added that many of them could not participate in the survey since they weren't domiciled here.

Typical pattern

The enumeration in Bengaluru has been poor during previous surveys, too.

During the statewide survey of scheduled castes (SCs) that was held earlier this year, the enumeration in the state crossed 90%, while it was merely around 50% in GBA limits (at that time it was called BBMP).

Even the Kantharaj survey numbers had been lesser in Bengaluru (around 80%), when compared to figures from the rest of Karnataka, which crossed 95%.

"The web portal will be open for 10 more days (till November 10). If citizens who have missed out, submit a request to the helpline, GBA or respective district administration and give their phone number and address, we will coordinate for the time and send someone to their house for conducting the survey. Using the web portal login, they will help citizens to participate," backward classes welfare department principal secretary Tulasi Maddineni said.

An enumerator fills in the details at a household during the socio-educational survey at Ganganagar in Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO

Is Siddaramaiah the CM or is it DKS, Kumaraswamy seeks to know

'Cong govt can complete full term if internal differences are resolved'

H D KUMARASWAMY
Union Minister

"The CM is asking journalists to ask the Deputy CM about the potholes. This is the height of irresponsibility.

BENGALURU, DHNS

Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy on Saturday asked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to clarify whether he was still the CM of the state or if Deputy CM D K Shivakumar now occupied the top post.

Kumaraswamy expressed disappointment with the CM's answer to a query on the missed deadline for filling potholes on Bengaluru's roads. "The CM is asking journalists to ask the Deputy CM about the potholes. This is the height of irresponsibility," said Kumaraswamy.

The Union Minister further said that Siddaramaiah seemed incapable of discharging his responsibilities.

Responding to Leader of Opposition in the Assembly and senior BJP leader R Ashoka's statements on the saffron party's readiness to face midterm polls in the state, Kumaraswamy said, "If the BJP is ready, so is the JD(S). If the government falls, we must be prepared for elections. But I won't talk about midterm polls; if Congress leaders resolve their differences, this government will complete its five-year term since the ruling party has 136 MLAs."

Kumaraswamy, who flagged off the 'Pustaka Jaatre' organised by Sapna Book House to mark Kannada Rajyotsava, urged the state government to resume wholesale procurement of Kannada books, and distribute them to public libraries.

"The state government has reportedly not procured books for public libraries for the last four or five years. I hope the government is not in a position where it cannot afford to purchase Kannada books for libraries," said the Union Minister.

On Saturday, Kumaraswamy wrote to the CM, urging him to take immediate steps to procure books for public libraries.

He said, "Youngsters are addicted to mobile phones. The need of the hour is to wean them away from mobile phones and inculcate the habit of reading. Furthermore, public libraries are places where one can kindle a passion for the language and its literature. Literary works of our writers must be easily accessible to the public."

The union minister said he was re-reading Ta Ra Su's magnum opus 'Durgastamana'.

"I have read it many times, but it is so interesting, it's exciting each time I read it," he said.

HC directs NWKRTC to reconsider compassionate appointment plea of woman

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Dharwad bench of the high court has directed the management of North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) to reconsider the application seeking appointment on compassionate grounds by a woman with an extendable age limit, owing to the circumstances narrated by her.

Justice M Nagaprasanna has directed the corporation to reconsider the application of Saroja whose husband Ganesh Rao Kondai, a driver with NWKRTC, had died on September 27, 2023.

The petitioner contended that she was 47 years old when her husband died. She submitted representations seeking compassionate appointments explaining the financial condition of the family. Her representations were rejected in January and May 2025, citing that her age is beyond the cut-off age of 43 years.

It was argued that the scheme for appointment on compassionate grounds, though restricts the age to 43, undermines the objective of compassionate appointment. It was submitted that if the scheme is read strictly, it is as though one has to become a widow before 43 years. She cited a similar case (Lakshmavva case), in which the High Court held that the appointment on compassionate grounds cannot be turned down. The high court in that case had also directed the NWKRTC to frame a policy that is humane in nature.

Justice Nagaprasanna noted that in the Lakshmavva case, a co-ordinate bench already observed that the appointment on compassionate grounds should be considered without reference to the upper age limit of 43 years. "I am in respectful agreement with what the Co-ordinate Bench has held, but I deem it appropriate to amplify the order. It becomes opposite to refer to the judgment of the Supreme Court in the Canara Bank vs Ajith Kumar GK case," Justice Nagaprasanna said.

The court further said, "The Supreme Court holds that the need for compassionate appointment should be the consideration by any Corporation or the employer while rejecting or accepting the application. No such analysis has been made in the case at hand, as directed by the Supreme Court in the aforesaid judgment. Therefore, the petition deserves to succeed on the sole score that the Corporation will have to now reconsider the application of the petitioner seeking appointment on compassionate grounds with regard to a relaxable age limit or the extendable age limit, owing to the circumstances that the applicant has narrated in two of the representations submitted by her."

It's only between me and CM, says DKS on 'November revolution'

BENGALURU, DHNS: Unruffled by questions about the 'November Revolution', Deputy CM D K Shivakumar said that only those discussions he had with CM Siddaramaiah would carry any significance, adding that statements made by others were immaterial.

"Discussions I have with the CM and the decisions taken therein are final," Shivakumar told journalists at an event organised by the Department of School Education and Literacy to mark Kannada Rajyotsava.

He said, "We were able to win 136 seats, and our aim is to win 140 seats next. We are on the same page as far as that is concerned".

ಮೈಸೂರು ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಕಾಲೇಜು ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ,
(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಸ್ವಾಯತ್ತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ)
ಇರ್ವಿನ್‌ರಸ್ತೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು–570 001
Website: www.mmcri.karnataka.gov.in, E-mail: mmcrimysore@yahoo.com
:+91-0821-2520512 (Off.), 2520803 (Fax)

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ(1)/78/2024–25 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 31.10.2025

"ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ"

ಮೈಸೂರು ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಕಾಲೇಜು ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಇಲ್ಲಿನ ವಿವಿಧ ವಿಭಾಗಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಖಾಲಿಯಿರುವ ಸೀನಿಯರ್ ರೆಸಿಡೆಂಟ್ ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಇಲಾಖೆಯ ಆಯುಕ್ತಾಲಯ/ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಿಂದ ಒಂದು ವರ್ಷದ ಕಡ್ಡಾಯ ಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಪೂರೈಸಲು ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಸ್ಥಳ ನಿಯುಕ್ತಿಗೊಳ್ಳುವವರೆಗೆ ಅಥವಾ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ನಮೂದಿಸಿರುವ ಅವಧಿಗೆ ಅಥವಾ ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದು ಮೊದಲೋ ಅದರಂತೆ ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ ಖಾಲಿ ಇರುವ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ವಿಭಾಗಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಸೀನಿಯರ್ ರೆಸಿಡೆಂಟ್ ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಸಿಕ ಸಂಚಿತ ವೇತನ ರೂ. 75,000/– ಗಳಿಗೆ ತಾತ್ಕಾಲಿಕವಾಗಿ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದಡಿ ನೇಮಕ ಮಾಡುವ ಸಂಬಂಧ ಅರ್ಹರಿಂದ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ	ವಿಭಾಗ	ಹುದ್ದೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಅವಧಿ	Operating Roster Points	
1	ಅನಾಟಮಿ	3	06 ತಿಂಗಳು	1.GM-(PH) 2.SC-(PH), 3.GM - (KAN) 4.ST-(R) 5.SC-(R) 6.2A-(R) 7.ST-(PH) 8.SC-(R) 9.GM(R) 10.GM-(PH) 11.2A-(R) 12.GM-(R) 13.2B-(R) 14.ST-(W) 15.3B-(R) 16.GM-(R) 17.ST-(R)	18.3A - (R) 19.GM-(R) 20.SC-(R) 21.GM-(KAN) 22.2A-(W) 23.ST-(G) 24.Cat 1-(PH) 25.SC-(KAN) 26.GM-(R) 27.3B-(PH) 28.2A-(R) 29.2B-(PH) 30.2A-(KAN) 31.SC-(R) 32.3A-(PH) 33.GM-(R)
2	ಫಿಸಿಯಾಲಜಿ	3			
3	ಫಾರ್ಮಕಾಲಜಿ	3			
4	ಮೈಕ್ರೋಬಯಾಲಜಿ	3			
5	ಕಮ್ಯೂನಿಟಿ ಮೆಡಿಸಿನ್	3			
6	ಫಾರೆನ್ಸಿಕ್ ಮೆಡಿಸಿನ್	3			
7	ಜನರಲ್ ಮೆಡಿಸಿನ್	6	11 ತಿಂಗಳು		
8	ಪೀಡಿಯಾಟ್ರಿಕ್ಸ್	1			
9	ನೇತ್ರಚಿಕಿತ್ಸಾ	1			
10	ರೇಡಿಯೋ ಡಯಾಗ್ನೋಸಿಸ್	1			
11	ರೇಡಿಯೋ ಥೆರಪಿ	1			
12	ಯುರಾಲಜಿ	1			
13	ಕಾರ್ಡಿಯಾಲಜಿ	1			
14	ಸರ್ಜಿಕಲ್ ಗ್ಯಾಸ್ಟ್ರೋ ಎಂಟರಾಲಜಿ	1			
15	ಮೆಡಿಕಲ್ ಗ್ಯಾಸ್ಟ್ರೋ ಎಂಟರಾಲಜಿ	1			
16	Cardio Thoracic Vascular Surgery	1			
	ಒಟ್ಟು	33			

* ಎನ್.ಎಂ.ಸಿ. ನಿಯಮಾವಳಿಯಂತೆ ಸದರಿ ಹುದ್ದೆಗೆ ಅರ್ಹತೆ ಹೊಂದಿರುವ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಆಡಳಿತ ನಮೂನೆಯನ್ನು ಪಡೆದು, ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಅಗತ್ಯ ಸದರಿ ಕಛೇರಿಯಿಂದ ಅರ್ಜಿ ದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯಕ್ಕೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು. * ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 10.11.2025 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 05:00** ಗಂಟೆ ಒಳಗೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕು. * ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ವಿಳಾಸ: ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಹಾಗೂ ಡೀನ್, ಎಂಎಂಸಿ&ಆರ್‌ಐ, ಮೈಸೂರು (Hard Copy Only) * ಸಂದರ್ಶನದ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12.11.2025 ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ** ಮತ್ತು ಸ್ಥಳ: ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು & ಡೀನ್‌ರವರ ಬೋರ್ಡ್ ರೂಂ, ಎಂಎಂಸಿ & ಆರ್‌ಐ, ಮೈಸೂರು * ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ವಯೋಮಿತಿ : ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ – 38 ವರ್ಷ, ಓಬಿಸಿ – 40 ವರ್ಷಗಳು & **SC/ST** 43 ವರ್ಷಗಳು * ಸಂದರ್ಶನದ ದಿನದಂದು ದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಖುದ್ದಾಗಿ ಹಾಜರಾಗುವ ಅರ್ಹ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳನ್ನು ಸಹ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಗೆ ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು. * ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ರೋಸ್ಟರ್ ಬಿಂದುಗಳಿಗೆ ಅರ್ಹ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಲಭ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲದಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ, ಮೆರಿಟ್ ಆಧಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ನಿರ್ದೇಶನ ಪಡೆದು ಮುಂದಿನ ಕ್ರಮ ವಹಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು.

ಸ್ಥಳ: ಮೈಸೂರು
ಸಹಿ/– ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಮತ್ತು ಡೀನ್,
DIPR/DDMYS/1154/KSMCA/629/2025-26 ಮೈಸೂರು ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಕಾಲೇಜು ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು

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Karnataka Grameena Bank, Head Office: No.32, Sanganakal Road, Gandhinagar Ballari – 583103. **Contact No. 9485679821**

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ವಿದ್ಯಾಸಂಗಮ, ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಹೆದ್ದಾರಿ–04, ಭೂತರಾಮನಹಟ್ಟಿ, ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ–591156
(ನ್ಯಾಕ್ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ B+ಗ್ರೇಡ್–2021) PM-USHA (MERU)
ಪರೀಕ್ಷಾ ವಿಭಾಗ
E-mail : registrareval@rcub.ac.in Website : www.rcub.ac.in
Phone No.: 0831-2565237

ಕ್ರಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ರಾಚವಿ/ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ/ಪವಿ/2025–26/6445 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 31–10–2025

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal)

Registrar (Evaluation), Rani Channamma University, Belagavi has called short term tender for Management of Examination Tabulation Activities in RCU, Belagavi for 2025-26 and for Academic Year through KPP Portal from 31-10-2025. Registered companies may apply through **Website: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Tender must be uploaded at e-portal within 14-11-2025 before 05.00 PM. EMD amount for the tender is Rs. 8,00,000/- For further details visit www.rcub.ac.in or contact Exam Section, Rani Channamma University, Belagavi.

Sd/- Registrar (Evaluation)
Rani Channamma University, Belagavi

Office of the Commissioner
Ballari City Corporation, Ballari.
Gadigi Chennappa Circle(Royal Circle) Ballari-583101
Landline No : 08392-273479 /278168
Website : www.ballaricity.mrc.gov.in
E-mail ID: ka.ballari.cc@gmail.com

No:CCB/ENG/AMRUTH 2.0/2025-26 Date:30.10.2025

CORRIGENDUM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP portal Only)

Tenders were already Inivited under 2025-26 Amrut 2.0 Scheme by Ballari City Corporation on 18.10.2025 which was published in Deccan Herald Newpaper on 19.10.2025 for the following works 1) DMA/2025-26 /OW/ Work_Indent 49795-Rs.167.95 Lakhs(Others), 2) DMA/2025-26/OW/Work_Indent 49792-Rs.62.81 Lakhs(Others), 3) DMA/2025-26/OW/Work_Indent 49788-Rs.94.37 Lakhs(Others) & 4) DMA/2025-26/OW/Work_Indent 49790-Rs.52.36 Lakhs(Others). Modified dates are last date for submission of tender is on 06.11.2025 at 17.30 Hours, opening of technical bid is on 10.11.2025 at 10.30 Hours, technically qualified bidder's financial bid will be opened on 12.11.2025 at 10.30 Hours. For further details contact this office during working days.

Sd/- Commissioner,
Ballari City Corporation. Ballari.
DIPR/Ballari/602/KSMCA/2025-26

CM: Policy soon to shield Kannadigas' jobs from AI threat

AI threat, From Page 3

On expanding Kannada teaching at madrasas, he said, "Currently, we are teaching Kannada at 180 madrasas and will extend it to 1,500."

Expressing concern over children's addiction to mobile phones and other AI-based technologies, Siddaramaiah said that besides government's education schemes, the role of parents was also important. "The new generation is facing problems which did not exist in the past. Though technology is making a positive impact, it is also leading to anxiety. It is affecting children's innocence, we need to take care of them," the CM said.

Siddaramaiah also targeted the Centre by accusing it of causing injustice to the state to the tune of more than Rs 1 lakh crore from various projects including Rs 70,000 crore which had to be released to the state under 15th Finance Commission in the last five years. "The constitutionally bound federal system has been damaged over the past few years with the states' powers being snatched. There is a need to fight against the Centre's injustice," he added.

Meanwhile, for the first time, the Department of School Education and Literacy will organise a mega parents and teachers meeting at government schools across the state on November 14 on the occasion of Children's Day. Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa announced the scheme on Saturday.

Tunnel road: DKS says ready to form committee under BJP's Ashoka

Tunnel road, From Page 3

On Thursday, Ashoka had announced that the BJP would stage a protest on Sunday to oppose the project.

"In Bengaluru, just the mention of the tunnel road project strikes fear in people's hearts. No one knows whose home will be affected where. In Lalbagh, six acres of land is being acquired for the project and no department has granted permission for this. With the Bihar elections approaching, they might be pushing this project to make money," he said.

Ashoka had also announced that the BJP would stage a protest at Lalbagh under the slogan 'Save Lalbagh, Protect Bengaluru'.

The ambitious infrastructure project has attracted flak from the Opposition.

Many activists have also raised concerns over the environmental impact of the project on Lalbagh. Multiple Public Interest Litigations challenging the project have been filed in the high court.

Recently, the state government informed the high court that till the next date of hearing on the pending PILs, no trees would be cut inside Lalbagh for the proposed tunnel road.

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Ordinary Kashmiris choosing peace over violence

'Now ,we worry about weather, not what's happening on street'

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

In the saffron fields outside Pampore, 45-year-old farmer Ghulam Rasool inspects the violet blossoms glistening with morning dew.

A decade ago, he would have kept one ear tuned to the echo of slogans from a nearby protest or the distant thud of tear-gas shells. "Now we worry only about the weather, not what's happening on the street," he says.

That sentiment captures a quieter, less dramatic transformation underway in the Kashmir Valley — a shift in people's mood from anger and confrontation to endurance and cooperation.

Six years after the revocation of Article 370 ended Jammu and Kashmir's special status, many here are negotiating peace in their own ways: by investing in business, enrolling their children in better schools, or voting in the recent Assembly elections.

Srinagar's Lal Chowk, once a symbol of defiance, today reflects this subtle recalibration. Cafés and boutique stores dot the lanes that once echoed with shutdown calls. Youngsters with laptops throng a new co-working space near Residency Road, discussing startups and online marketing.

This new calm, though, isn't just about the absence of gunfire. For many Kashmiris, it's about regaining dignity through stability. "We are tired of being seen as victims or villains," says social worker Shazia from Budgam. "Our empowerment doesn't come from slogans. It comes from being able to send our children to school, run a small business, and live without fear."

Students take a walk amid 'chinar' trees during the autumn season, also known as 'Harud', at Kashmir University, in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday. PTI PHOTO

Her collective of 20 women, supported by a Central government scheme, earned Rs 12 lakh last year. Shazia calls it her "azaadi of a different kind".

The most striking change, however, comes from the generation that grew up in the shadow of militancy. For them, India is now the larger ecosystem that offers opportunity — scholarships, sports leagues, social media platforms, and sometimes even escape.

The government's outreach has helped many young Kashmiris travel outside the state for training or competitions — experiences that often reshape perceptions. "When I went to Chennai for a sports event, I realised how much we isolate ourselves," says Danish Dar from Sopore. "People were warm. They didn't see me as different. That changed me."

The decline in militancy is also reflected in the social rejection of violence. Funeral processions that once drew thousands now attract few. Militants' erstwhile "martyrdom glamour" has lost its appeal.

But none of this means Kashmir's wounds have healed. Political alienation, human rights concerns, and the lingering scars of conflict continue to shape the Valley's psyche. But a pragmatic optimism is taking root within this complexity.

At the Dal Lake, where shikaras now ferry honeymooners from Bengaluru and Guwahati, 62-year-old boatman Abdul Majeed smiles when asked about the change: "We've seen enough slogans and stones. Now, we want customers."

Fact-finding team seeks CBI probe into T'gana 'fake encounter'

Says victim Riyaz portrayed by cops as notorious criminal

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

An independent fact-finding team of advocates and local residents has labeled the police shooting of 24-year-old Shaik Riyaz in Telangana's Nizamabad on October 20 as a 'fake encounter'.

Riyaz, accused of killing police constable E Pradeep Kumar, was portrayed by the police as a notorious criminal.

The committee said that their 10-day investigation, which included interviews and site visits, suggests the encounter was staged to obscure a nexus involving police, counterfeit currency operations, and finance companies.

Riyaz, they noted, was legitimately employed as a recovery agent for several non-banking financial companies dealing in two-wheeler loans, an aspect allegedly omitted from the police narrative. The committee called for a CBI investigation and the establishment of a court-monitored Special Investigation Team to oversee the case until a CBI probe begins.

The report said that the police allegedly presented Riyaz as a hardcore criminal, omitting evidence of his legitimate profession. Local accounts indicated his criminal cases were mostly civil in nature and exaggerated by police, violating his right to a presumption of innocence.

Riyaz's family, including his mother, wife, and two minor children, was allegedly subjected to brutal sexual abuse and torture while in unlawful police custody, a claim corroborated by confidential sources, said the report.

The report also raised severe doubts over missing or withheld evidence.

Key items such as Riyaz's scooter, weapons, CCTV footage, and call records were never produced.

Eyewitnesses fear retaliation, and there are glaring inconsistencies in official testimonies, especially that of a key police eyewitness. A CBI investigation covering the alleged custodial death, torture, extortion racket, and counterfeit currency nexus, said the report.

"Immediate preservation of critical evidence, including CDRs, CCTV, and medical reports. Formation of a court-monitored SIT until a CBI takeover. Protection for witnesses and interim compensation and rehabilitation for Riyaz's family. Registration of FIRs for custodial murder, sexual assault, and extortion against implicated officials is our immediate demand," said social and civil rights activist Khalida Parveen, who was part of the fact-finding team.

AAI report on B'luru 2nd airport flags terrain & airspace issues

AAI report, From Page 3

"Apart from this, the terrain at both locations is pretty much the same. The Nelamangala-Kunigal side is a little more hilly; there are more stones and 'bandes'. However, these can be broken and the land can be flattened, but that would cause an increase in the construction costs."

The three locations also fall in the HAL airspace area; however, this can be resolved and is unlikely to cause any relocation, he said.

"There is already a flexible airspace usage agreement, according to which defence airspace can be utilised for civilian purposes as well," the AAI official said. "How this works is that, once the aircraft operates under the ATC (Air Traffic Control) of the airport/AAI when it takes off, but as it moves into the HAL airspace, it'll operate under the HAL ATC. The HAL would have to increase their manpower to accommodate the new airport's operations," he explained, adding that the HAL had already given preliminary consent for the proposed second airport using its airspace.

Cultural fest 'Confluences of Karnataka' enthralls audiences

BENGALURU, DHNS: A two-day cultural fest celebrating the 'Confluences of Karnataka' kicked off on Saturday at the Bangalore International Centre (BIC) in Domlur.

Titled 'Krishna to Kaveri', the event is organised by the Azim Premji University, in collaboration with BIC. Popular filmmaker and writer Nagathihalli Chandrashekhar inaugurated the festival.

There were several cultural performances and workshops through the day.

A Hindustani vocal recital by Pt Vinayak Torvi and team enthralled the audience in the opening concert.

Pandit Vinayak Torvi presents Hindustani vocal recital at cultural fest, 'Confluences of Karnataka' at the Bangalore International Centre in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The 'Kannada Gottilla' workshop was particularly impressive. It provided a crash course in spoken Kannada. A quiz program titled 'Sutta Mutta Gottaa?' was conducted by Tejasvi Udupa. Various workshops were also organised for children.

For the schedule of the festival's second day, visit bangaloreinternationalcentre.org

At least 9 dead in stampede at Andhra temple

Stampede, From Page 3

Visuals from the stampede captured scenes of numerous women trapped in a narrow space flanked by handrails, puja baskets still in their hands, many gasping for air and screaming for help.

Minister K Atchannaidu told reporters that the management failed to implement adequate crowd-control measures. "Though the temple was not widely known regionally, over 20,000 devotees unexpectedly arrived today. The temple trustees failed to alert authorities about the anticipated rush," he said.

While Srikakulam collector Swapni Dinkar Pundkar put the death toll as 10, district SP K V Maheswar Reddy said it was only nine and termed the condition of one person "serious".

Reddy clarified that the incident was the result of a railing collapse near the steps, which created panic. The public thought that something was falling and panicked. They fell from a height of about six feet. Since the collapse was from a height of six feet, one person fell on another, and that led to the incident, he added.

"It is purely an accident and due to the owner's negligence. They haven't applied for police bandobust and there were no permissions also," said Reddy.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu said organisers did not provide prior information to police or officials. He added that a full-scale investigation has been ordered into the tragedy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "pained" by the stampede. "An ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each from PMNRF will be given to the next of kin of the deceased. The injured will receive Rs 50,000," he said.

Fund misuse alleged at EPF Staff Credit Co-op Society; investors anxious

BENGALURU, DHNS

An alleged financial misappropriation of crores of rupees has come to light at the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Staff Credit Co-operative Society, located near Richmond Circle. The society, which has been operating for the last 61 years is being run by employees.

A senior police officer from Cubbon Park police said that based on a complaint, an FIR has been registered against the CEO Gopi and an accountant Jagadish of the Society. The complainant Muralidhara C J, the president of the Society, alleged that after scrutinising bank account details, transaction records, and the administrative activities, it was found that funds have been illegally transferred from certain accounts.

Hundreds of employees deposited a portion of their monthly salaries into the society as savings for their future.

However, the society's accounts are now reportedly empty, leaving employees anxious and outraged as their lifetime savings have vanished, said Mahadevaiah B, one of the investors.

Speaking to *DH*, one of the office-bearers said, "most of the investors are not ready to fight legally as the accused went absconding soon after FIR was filed on Friday night. We don't want to move court for legal action and we just want our money back. So far we have not contacted any legal experts and we have also asked the complainant to withdraw the case."

Kiran, an investor who had been waiting at the police station since early morning, told *DH*, "We do not want to disclose details of the case to the media as it involves our personal investments. We don't want to lose our money. The police have assured us that they will resolve the matter."

Muralidhar, president of the Society, said, "Only employees of the EPF were allowed to open accounts in the society. I have invested about Rs 2 lakh. After taking charge as president six months ago, I came to know that funds were missing."

Last rites of Mumbai hostage suspect performed

MUMBAI, DHNS: The last rites of Rohit Arya, who was shot dead by police in Mumbai during an operation to rescue 19 persons, including 17 kids, whom he took hostage, were held in Pune in the wee hours on Saturday.

The wife, son and close family members of Arya were present at the cremation.

The Crime Branch-CID has taken over the investigation from the Powai police station and is trying to reconstruct the crime and understand the life story of the accused and his financial details.

It is said that Arya had been living away from Pune for several years and had minimal contact with family.

Rohit was reportedly agitated as the government was not sanctioning funds—around Rs 2 crore—for his project even as questions arose as to why the then state School Education Minister Deepak Kesarkar, who is from the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, made payments to him from his personal account.

In Oct 2022, Kesarkar inaugurated Project Let's Change - PLA Swachhata Monitor under the 'Majhi Shala, Sundar Shala' initiative.

Arya was appointed director for the project from July 20 to Oct 2, 2023.

The government, in a clarification, said Rohit and his firm had no official link with school education department.

"Arya's CSR project 'Swachhta Monitor' was approved only in 2021 with Rs 9 lakh funding, but its later versions, including Swachhta Monitor 2.0 and the Rs 6.14 crore 2024–25 proposal, were never sanctioned. Despite this, the organisation continued its activities privately without the approval or the authorisation to collect funds from schools," the government said.

Koragas give clues to Indians' 6th genetic ancestry

Koragas, From Page 3

"The finding that the 'proto-Dravidian' ancestry is found in many other groups, is consistent with our finding published in 2003 that the Dravidian speakers, now confined to southern India, may have earlier been widespread throughout India," he said.

"Their finding that the Koraga, Brahui (Balochistan) and Oraon have a shared ancestry is novel and significant," Majumder, Emeritus Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata told *DH*. The study has appeared in the European Journal of Human Genetics.

Study: Don't sleep over insomnia, it's linked to mental health

Insomnia, From Page 3

Speaking of the earlier-mentioned middle-aged patient, Jemimah told *DH*, "He had tried multiple things, and this was like the last option for him. His level of dysfunction was very high; he had even quit multiple jobs because of his poor sleep. We tried to give him a wind-down routine, increase his level of activities, and introduced some relaxation exercises before bed, while restructuring/modifying his unhelpful beliefs on sleep and related aspects."

She added that after the intervention, the man is doing much better. "He has found a job after a five-year break and is maintaining well. Now, even if he doesn't get sleep on a particular day, he is able to not get into panic mode and deal with his daily functioning."

Stressing the importance of maintaining a healthy sleep schedule, the researcher highlighted that while sleep difficulties can lead to multiple physical health problems, including weakened immunity, high blood pressure and memory issues, they can also exacerbate existing mental health conditions.

Maintaining a wind-down routine one hour before going to sleep can help one get a healthy sleep; it can include stretching, taking a warm bath, dimming the lights, reading and avoiding screens.

Following a successful pilot study, the researchers are now working to expand the sample size to further test the efficacy of the intervention.

D'sthala SIT yet to get records of 38 unnatural death cases

MANGALURU, DHNS: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged mass burial case in Dharmasthala has reportedly found that records of unnatural death (UDR) cases are missing in respect of 38 unidentified bodies disposed of by the local gram panchayat in last few decades.

During the investigation, the SIT gathered data from the local gram panchayat about unclaimed or unidentified bodies that had been disposed of.

The team also obtained records of unnatural death cases registered at the Belthangady and Dharmasthala police stations — Dharmasthala earlier came under the jurisdiction of the Belthangady police station.

However, when the SIT compared both sets of records, it discovered that several cases of unidentified bodies mentioned by the gram panchayat had no corresponding UDR entries in the police station records.

"We have cross-verified documents obtained from both the gram panchayat and the police. So far, we have not found UDR records for about 38 such cases, though the number could be higher. Some of these cases date back two or three decades, so it's possible the records were lost over time," SIT sources said.

"According to procedure, whenever an unidentified body is found, it should be disposed of only after the local police register a UDR case and provide written instructions to the panchayat. If any body is buried or disposed of by the panchayat without a police-registered UDR, it would constitute a serious procedural lapse. Post-mortem and related documents must also be preserved in police records," SIT sources added.

Officials also said that some lapses might have occurred while transferring old records or due to files being misplaced.

"We are investigating this aspect in detail. The absence of UDR records alone does not prove that the 38 bodies were disposed of illegally," sources clarified.

The SIT sources further revealed that in several cases of unnatural deaths even the burial locations of the bodies were not forthcoming from the records of the gram panchayat.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Rainfall occurred at many places over Coastal and North Interior Karnataka and dry weather prevailed over South Interior Karnataka
Forecast Nov 02: Rainfall to occur at some places over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	24.8	21	1.4
Bidar	29.5	21	00
Vijayapura	29	21.5	00
Dharwad	25	20.6	01
Haveri	29	20.2	00
Kalaburagi	31.8	23	00
Raichur	30.8	23	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	31.1	23.5	3.4
Karwar	29.3	25.3	9.4
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	31.8	23.4	1.3

INTERIOR SOUTH			
Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	26.2	20.6	00
Bengaluru	28.8	19.2	00
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	29.9	18.6	00
Davangere	31	19.5	00
Hassan	31.8	NA	00
Mysuru	30	16	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	29.8	16.4	00
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	30.7	19.4	00
Kolkata	33.4	26.8	00
Mumbai	30	25.1	05
Chennai	35.4	26	00
Pune	27.2	21.4	01
Hyderabad	30.6	21.2	00
Th'puram	34.2	23.5	00

BLOODIED PAST Assam uneasy as BJP dredges up dark chapter of history

Nellie massacre: Picking at scabs after four decades

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Until 1980s, Nellie in central Assam was like any other nondescript village in the region. However, for the last four decades, any public discourse mentioning this rural hamlet, located along the arterial NH-37 in Morigaon district, has drawn much attention in the Northeastern state.

On February 18, 1983, hundreds of Bengali-speaking Muslims in Nellie and nearby villages were massacred and their houses set on fire, allegedly by tribal villagers.

In barely six hours, as many as 1,892 people were massacred (official figure) and their bodies buried. Unofficially, many claimed that the death toll had crossed 3,000.

The bloodbath still haunts Assam and is considered the worst massacre independent India has witnessed till date.

The bloody episode unravelled during the peak of the Assam Agitation, or the anti-foreigners movement, more than 40 years ago.

The Assam Agitation ended with the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985, and most cases related to the Agitation — including the Nellie massacre — were subsequently closed.

Despite this legal closure, Nellie continues to be a haunted name. The topic is so touchy that the Assam government even barred Japanese researcher Makiko Kimura from delivering a lecture in the state on her book, *The Nellie Massacre of 1983: Agency of Rioters*, published in 2013.

According to one version, the residents of Nellie and nearby villages were attacked as they had defied the call issued by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and others to boycott the Assembly elections amid the Assam Agitation in 1983.

> It seems the CM is frustrated with people of all castes and religions uniting after Zubeen Garg's death. People from all communities are demanding justice for him and showing allegiance to Garg's ideology, which was against communalism
>
> **Debabrata Saikia**
> Leader of the Opposition

> We didn't know whether the copy we have is actual. So, we interviewed the officials and clerks of that period who were involved in the report. The document was also sent to forensics for verification. When it was authenticated, we decided to make it public as people have the right to know what had happened and whose fault it was
>
> **Himanta Biswa Sarma**
> Chief Minister

Another version says Nellie residents were attacked as they were suspected of being behind the killing of a prominent leader of the Agitation in the Darang district, situated just on the other bank of the Brahmaputra.

However, there is no proper understanding even today about why the Nellie horror could not be prevented despite intelligence inputs.

The inquiry report of the Justice Tribhuvan Prasad Tewari Commission, constituted by the then Congress government, has not been made public yet either.

The parties that came to power in the state in subsequent years — be it the Asom Gana Parishad, Congress, or the BJP — did not reveal the contents, citing the sensitivity of the matter.

However, after more than 42 years since the massacre, the current BJP-led government, which is eyeing a hat-trick term in next year's Assembly polls, surprised many when it decided on October 23 to table the Tewari Commission report in the Assembly in November.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the decision was taken to allow the people to know about the Nellie massacre and the circumstances leading to it.

However, not everyone is convinced by this rationale.

Abdul Mutallek, a resident of Nellie, says he is clueless about the government's intention behind making the report public after 42 years.

"Why is the government trying to scratch the old wounds?" Mutallek asked while talking to *DH* over the phone. The 63-year-old man lost his two sisters, Rupia and Apia, aged 9 and 7 then, in the massacre. "We were caught unawares. I just ran away to save myself. But mostly the women and the children died as they could not flee. We can never forget the trauma," he said, adding: "We have been waiting for justice but none came to our rescue. Now, we hope that justice will be delivered."

Mutallek rejected the allegation that those killed were "foreigners". "Most here got their names enrolled in the NRC," he said.

Japanese researcher Kimura, in her book, said the survivors had gone back to their villages and had been living side-by-side with the attackers as justice continued to elude them.

The government's decision to reveal the report months ahead of the Assembly elections (March-April) has forced many to suspect that the BJP's aim is to reap political mileage. They believe that the report might be used to add to existing polarisation, which the saffron party has fuelled by carrying out eviction drives targeting the Bengali Muslims across Assam.

"The BJP may try to boost its Hindu-Muslim narrative as the inquiry commission reportedly questioned the Congress government's role," said Manoj Kumar Nath, a journalist in Guwahati, who wrote Assam Agitation. The book, published in 2015, talks about the background of the Assam Agitation and the Nellie massacre.

The BJP calls the Bengali-speaking Muslims "illegal migrants" and a threat to the identity of indigenous Assamese. The party banked on the Hindu-Muslim narrative and projected itself as a saviour of the indigenous people in the run-up to elections in 2016 and 2021. The party is adopting the same tactics ahead of the next Assembly elections.

"It is always welcome to correct the misreading narratives about the Nellie massacre which has been portrayed in a one-sided manner to target the migrants. But as the people of Assam know, the facts are otherwise," said Upamanyu Hazarika, a lawyer in the Supreme Court, who leads Pravajan Birodhi Manch.

"This government is interested only in giving out palliatives to the indigenous people in the run-up to the elections. Because, despite being in power at the Centre for the past 12 years and in Assam for 10 years, the BJP has taken no steps either to identify the Bangladeshis and send them back or initiate protective mechanisms like land reservations for the indigenous people."

VEXED ISSUE

- On February 18, 1983, over 1,800 Bengali-speaking Muslims (official figure) were killed within six hours
- Took place amid the Assam Movement or the anti-foreigners movement (1979-1985)
- Assam Agitation ended with the signing of the Assam Accord that promised to detect and deport the post-1971 migrants to Bangladesh
- The AASU leaders, who spearheaded the Assam Agitation, formed AGP and came to power twice (1985 and 1996)
- TP Tewari Commission inquiry report, which was submitted in 1984, has not been made public yet citing sensitivity
- The NRC exercise with March 24, 1971 as cut-off was carried out in Assam between 2013 and 2018 but the updated list was rejected by the BJP government and local organisations.
- The foreigner issue takes centre stage before elections

Indo-Pacific should be free from coercion: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, PTI

India's emphasis on rule of law and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific is not against any country, but to safeguard interests of all stakeholders, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday amid mounting global concerns over China's aggressive military posturing in the region.

In an address at a conclave of defence ministers of ASEAN member states and the bloc's dialogue partners in Kuala Lumpur, Singh said India believes that the Indo-Pacific should remain open, inclusive, and free from any form of 'coercion'.

He also pitched for an approach of 'collective security' to ensure sovereignty of every nation in the region.

"India's emphasis on the rule of law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and its advocacy for freedom of navigation and overflight in the Indo-Pacific, are not directed against any country but are meant to safeguard the collective interests of all regional stakeholders," he said.

Singh said India's strategic engagement with ASEAN is long-term and principle-driven, and it rests on a shared belief that the region should remain open, inclusive, and free from "coercion".

Rajnath Singh at the ASEAN defence ministers' meeting in Kuala Lumpur. PTI

"The security of the future will not depend solely on military capabilities, but on the management of shared resources, the security of digital and physical infrastructure, and a collective response to humanitarian crises," he said.

Singh said the ADMM-Plus can be that bridge to connect strategic dialogue to practical outcomes and take the region forward towards peace and shared prosperity.

"India views its role in this framework through the lens of a spirit of partnership and cooperation. Our approach is not transactional, but rather principle-driven," he said.

"Let us all together reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding and strengthening the ASEAN-led, inclusive regional security architecture, which has served our region so admirably," Singh said.

Kerala declared free of extreme poverty; Oppn calls it fraud

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PTI: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday declared in the assembly that the state was free of extreme poverty.

Vijayan made the announcement in a special session of the House convened on the occasion of Kerala 'Piravi' or formation day.

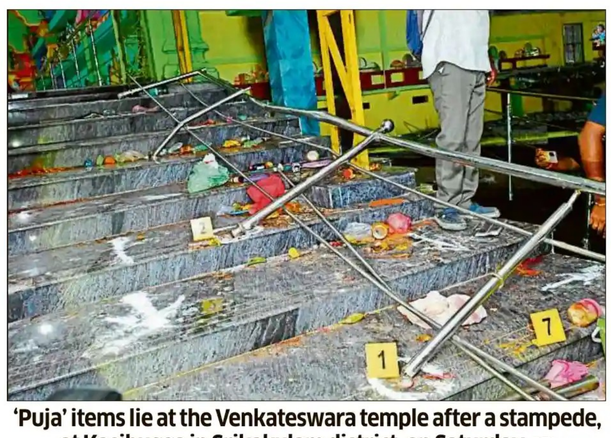
Meanwhile, the opposition termed this claim a 'fraud' and boycotted the session. As the session commenced, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, V D Satheesan, said the CM's statement via rule 300 was 'pure fraud' and in 'contempt' of House rules. "So, we cannot join in that and are completely boycotting the session," he said.

The CM said with the eradication of extreme poverty from the state, Kerala, "as a laboratory of welfare initiatives", was presenting a new model to the nation that other states can emulate and benefit from.

Denied proper darshan at Tirumala, he built his own temple in Srikakulam

Using his own money, Panda constructed the shrine, without taking donations

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS



'Puja' items lie at the Venkateswara temple after a stampede, at Kasibugga in Srikakulam district, on Saturday. PTI

The Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple at Kasibugga in Srikakulam's Palasa town in Andhra Pradesh — where a stampede on Saturday claimed more than 10 lives — owes its existence to the resolve of 94-year-old Hari Mukunda Panda.

A decade earlier, Panda had a bitter experience at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala, where he was denied proper darshan of the presiding deity.

Determined to create a similar shrine accessible to all, he devoted 12 acres and 40 cents of his 50-acre estate to building the temple, spending Rs 2 crore of his own funds over six years without accepting any donations.

The temple was inaugurated four months ago, though some finishing touches were still pending.

Its main deity is a nine-foot-nine-inch idol of Lord Venkateswara — a replica of Tirumala idol — accompanied by separate sanctums for consorts Sree Devi and Bhu Devi.

"When I was a kid, I frequently visited Tirumala. The Archaka Swamis were very friendly and helped us get good darshan. But that is all past glory," said Panda.

"About ten years ago, I had a very bitter experience. I waited in a long queue, and when I finally entere, I was pushed and could not have a proper darshan," he recalled.

"I shared this with my mother, and she asked, 'Why don't you build a Venkateswara Swamy temple in our village, so you and others can have darshan?' That's when we decided to build this temple."

He said his family intended to provide an experience similar to that of the Tirumala temple, which was why the main idol was modelled after the Tirumala deity. He also said they planned to serve the popular Laddu prasadam..

"I never expected so many devotees would turn up today. We thought it would be around 2,000 devotees as usual and did not inform the police," said Panda after the incident.

He visited the hospital where the injured were undergoing treatment. Meanwhile, the police and Revenue Department teams have taken control of the temple.

Compensation

Meanwhile, state minister Nara Lokesh announced compensation for victim. Families of the deceased will receive Rs 15 lakh each, while those critically injured will get Rs 3 lakh each. An additional Rs 10,000 will be provided for funeral expenses.

He also said that three of the deceased were TDP members, whose families will receive an extra Rs 5 lakh each from the party's insurance policy.

RSS can't be banned at someone's whim, says Dattatreya Hosabale

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Asking Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to learn from the past, RSS national general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale on Saturday said the saffron outfit was banned thrice, but people accepted it.

Speaking to reporters after the conclusion of the all-India executive meeting of the RSS in Jabalpur, Hosabale was replying to a question about Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's statement that the Sangh should be banned.

"Society has accepted the RSS as the organisation that works for the nation's unity, security, culture, and development. It cannot be banned because a few leaders call for it. The RSS was banned thrice, but everyone knows what happened after that. Before making any such demand, politicians should learn from past experiences," Hosabale said.

Hosabale urged the Central government to implement a 'population policy' to 'correct' demographical imbalances.

"A population policy is needed to address the problem of demographic imbalance; it is up to the government to swiftly formulate the policy. Infiltration, religious conversion, and high rate of population growth in some communities are primarily behind the rising threat of democratic imbalance," Hosabale said.

Population policy

"The government has spoken about it in Parliament. The sooner we have a population policy, the better it is," he said, adding that conversions of Sikhs in Punjab should also be taken up.

Hosabale also said the situation in Bengal is 'bad', especially after the last election. "Hatred and conflicts have risen there, especially due to the political leadership and the CM. Keeping a border state violent and unstable isn't good for the country," he said.

On the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists in Bihar, Hosabale said the 'refining of voter lists' is not taking place for the first time. "... it happens at regular intervals and is essential. There should be no opposition to it; those having objections to the SIR methodology should approach the ECI in the matter," he said.

Dattatreya Hosabale

WHAT HE SAID

- RSS leader Dattatreya Hosabale said the organisation is not opposed to a caste-based census but stressed it must be free of political motives and aimed solely at identifying and uplifting socially and economically backward communities.
- Asserting that infiltration, religious conversion and domination by a single community were three main factors that could destabilise democracy, he stressed on the need for a population control law.
- Live ins could not be curtailed through legislation alone. It requires social consciousness and awareness.

Change Delhi name to Indraprastha: BJP MP to Union govt

NEW DELHI, DHNS: BJP MP Praveen Khandelwal has appealed to the Central government to change the name of Delhi to "Indraprastha" in order to pay tribute to the city's historical legacy.

In a letter to UnionNinister Amit Shah on Saturday, and to Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, he said this was in the interest of civilisational symbolism and cultural reclamation.

Khandelwal said the name "Indraprastha" carried deep historical and cultural significance, tracing its origin to the Mahabharata era, when it was believed to be the capital of the Pandavas.

"Naming Delhi Indraprastha will be a fitting tribute to its glorious past and a reminder of India's timeless heritage," he wrote.

He said two key landmarks should also be renamed to carry the Indraprastha identity: The historic Old Delhi Railway Station should become "Indraprastha Junction", and the international airport be renamed "Indraprastha Airport".

India's strength lies in its Constitution: CJI Gavai

LUCKNOW, DHNS: Chief Justice of India (CJI) B R Gavai on Saturday said India's strength lay in its Constitution.

B R Gavai

At a seminar on "Constitution and Constitutionalism: The Philosophy of B R Ambedkar" at Allahabad University in Prayagraj, the CJI also said Ambedkar was a true nationalist.

"Despite there being some issues inside and outside the country, India is still united and strong, and the credit for that goes to the Constitution," he said.

He cited the examples of Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh and said India had been able to protect its citizens' fundamental rights only because of its Constitution.

"If the Constitution is the structure, then constitutionalism is the soul, and the soul believes that public representatives elected by the people will be accountable to the public," he noted.

The CJI also said some people criticised the Collegium system of appointment of judges by claiming that India was the only country where judges appointed judges, but it was not completely true.

"The government is also involved in this process," he noted.

CULINARY GLORY

Unesco tag puts Lucknow on world food map

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

Known for its mouthwatering Awadhi cuisines like 'galouti kebab' and 'Kakori kebab', Lucknow city has made it into the Unesco's 'Creative Cities Network' (CCN) under the 'Gastronomy' category, reflecting global recognition of its culinary heritage.

Unesco had, on Friday, announced the inclusion of 58 new cities in the CCN. With the inclusion of these new cities, including Lucknow, the CCN now had 408 cities from more than 100 nations.

Audrey Azoulay, Unesco's Director-General, said that the creative cities proved that culture and creative industry were not only traditions but were important catalysts to development.

"These cities support local initiatives and attract investments and also strengthen social unity," he added.

Galouti Kebab

The Unesco Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development, according to the Unesco's official website.

Uttar Pradesh Minister for Tourism and Culture Jaiveer Singh said that this achievement of Lucknow was in fact a global acceptance of its rich cuisines and culture.

"It is also proof of the rising power of the tourism sector," he said.

Singh said that the state tourism department had sent Lucknow's nomination for its inclusion in the list to the Union tourism ministry in January this year, and later on the Union government presented the final dossier to Unesco in March.

82.74 lakh tourists

UP principal secretary of tourism Amrit Abhijat said that 82.74 lakh tourists visited Lucknow in 2024, whereas in the first six months of this year, this figure had reached 70.20 lakh.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed Unesco's recognition, saying that Lucknow was synonymous with a vibrant culture at the core of which was a great culinary culture.

Lucknow is famous for its mouth-watering dishes, which include different types of 'kebabs' and 'biryani,' as well as sweets.

Countdown begins for launch of Isro's heaviest satellite

SRIHARIKOTA (ANDHRA PRADESH), PTI: The 24-hour countdown for the launch of the over 4,000 kg communication satellite CMS-03 commenced on Saturday, Isro said.

The satellite, weighing about 4,410 kg, will be the heaviest to be launched from Indian soil and into a geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO). The multi-band communication satellite will provide services over a wide oceanic region, including the Indian landmass, the space agency said.

The spacecraft will travel on board an LVM3-M5 rocket, dubbed 'Bahubali' for its heavy-lift capability. The launch vehicle has been fully assembled and integrated with the spacecraft, and it has been moved to the second launch pad here for taking up pre-launch operations, the space agency said on Saturday.

Later in a social media post, Isro said, "Countdown commences!! Final preparations complete and the countdown for LVM3-M5 (mission) has officially begun at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota".

"All systems are GO as we move closer to liftoff," the space agency said in its update.

The 43.5-metre-tall rocket is scheduled for a 5.26 pm liftoff on November 2. LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3) is the new heavy-lift launch vehicle of Isro and is used for placing 4,000 kg spacecraft in GTO in a cost-effective manner, the space agency said.

FRAGILE TIES Washington and Beijing's contest for power continues unabated

Trump-Xi truce offers a pause, not peace, in US-China rivalry

SUMIT GANGULY

US President Donald Trump has returned from his trip to East Asia, where, among other leaders, he met President Xi Jinping of China. With his characteristic fondness for hyperbole, he awarded himself a score of 12 out of 10 in grading the supposed success of his meeting with Xi. The actual results, however, are far more prosaic. At best, Trump has reached a truce with Xi in the trade war that he initiated.

At the outset, it is worthwhile summarising what his meeting with Xi has accomplished. China has agreed, for a year, to sell the United States rare earths used in a host of manufacturing processes ranging from automobiles to fighter aircraft. This agreement provides significant segments of American industry with a temporary reprieve but not a long-term solution.

Beijing has also agreed to buy US soyabeans. This, too, will offer much-needed relief for American farmers. However, it should be underscored that this merely returns trade in this agricultural sector to the status quo. Even though Trump has hailed it as a breakthrough, it is nothing of the sort.

Trump has also highlighted China's willingness to crack down on the illegal export of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of fentanyl. Over the past couple of decades, the drug has led to widespread abuse across significant swathes of the US, resulting in countless deaths. Most of these overdoses occurred in states that had witnessed sweeping deindustrialisation and subsequent job losses. Faced with bleak prospects and depression, many young men and women turned to this cheap and accessible drug. These regions are also those that voted for Trump. Consequently, he can claim that the limits he has apparently helped place on the export of precursor chemicals will help address a drug crisis.

To incentivise Xi, Trump has agreed to halve fentanyl-related tariffs from 20% to 10%, reducing overall US tariffs on Chinese goods from 57% to 47%. Beijing also said both sides have extended for a year the truce limiting additional tariffs that were to expire on November 10. Trump has also put on hold for a year his plan to expand technology-related export controls to Chinese subsidiaries. Both sides will hold further trade talks to pursue a comprehensive agreement before Trump's visit to the PRC later this year. The accord, however, remains fragile — failure to reach a deal could see both countries reimpose harsh punitive tariffs.

China appears to have made one notable political concession laden with symbolism. In the joint statement issued after the meeting, there was no mention of Taiwan. The absence of any reference to Taiwan was clearly a nod to the sentiments of various China hawks in the Trump administration. That said, it would be naïve to assume that Beijing has abandoned its claim on Taiwan. The gesture, at best, was a tactical move on its part.

It is also worth mentioning that the two sides agreed to work together to end the war in Ukraine. Beyond this pious declaration, no further details have emerged. As both presidents return home, they can claim victories before their domestic audiences. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that what they have achieved amounts to a temporary reset in ties. The atmospherics of this meeting were certainly positive, and some limited progress has been made in cooling tensions.

US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Busan, South Korea. AP/PTI FILE

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that the Sino-American rivalry is about to end. The two sides have deep differences across a range of issues—from competition in various parts of the world and their respective ties to Russia, to their differing views on the trans-Atlantic alliance and America's partners across Asia. Indeed, Beijing can be none too happy that Trump, for no apparent reason, announced his intention to resume nuclear testing—especially since he made the announcement just before landing in Busan. What signal he intended to send with this declaration, and to whom, remains an open question.

The Trump–Xi rapprochement, though limited, is of understandable concern in New Delhi. In some circles, especially given the recent downturn in US–India ties, it has led to fears of possible American unreliability and abandonment. These misgivings may not be entirely unfounded. However, it would be a mistake for New Delhi to assume that the recent warmth and limited agreements between Washington and Beijing herald a return to the ill-conceived notion of a G-2, in which the two parties would forge a global condominium. The differences between the two states cannot be papered over, especially after a single meeting that was heavy on fanfare but failed to address long-standing, underlying disagreements. What was achieved involved only tactical concessions and retreats.

The strategic differences between the two great powers — one seeking to maintain its global reach and the other aspiring to attain it — remain firmly in place. Assuming otherwise would be a mistake. The task before New Delhi is clear: despite Trump's mercurial behaviour, it should not abandon the multi-faceted partnership that has been carefully forged, nurtured, and sustained over the past two decades.

(The writer is a Senior Fellow and directs the Huntington Programme on Strengthening US–India Relations at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University)

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Bike enthusiasts ride on their penny-farthing bicycles, also known as high wheel, during the 'One Mile Race' competition in Prague on Saturday. AFP

Canada's PM Carney apologises to Trump over anti-tariff ad

▸ Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Saturday he had apologised to US President Donald Trump over an anti-tariff political advertisement and had told Ontario Premier Doug Ford not to run it, Reuters reports from Gyeongju.

Carney, speaking to reporters after attending an Asia-Pacific summit in South Korea, said he had made the apology privately to Trump when they both attended a dinner hosted by South Korea's president on Wednesday. "I did apologise to the president," Carney said, confirming comments by Trump made on Friday. Carney also confirmed that he had reviewed the advertisement with Ford before it aired, but said he had opposed using it. "I told Ford I did not want to go forward with the ad," he said. The advertisement, commissioned by Ford, an outspoken Conservative politician who is sometimes compared to Trump, uses a snippet of Republican icon and former President Ronald Reagan saying that tariffs cause trade wars and economic disaster. In response, Trump announced that he was increasing tariffs on goods from Canada, and Washington has also halted trade talks with Ottawa.

SongProof to protect Indian artists

▸ SongProof, a new blockchain-powered digital platform that allows singers, songwriters, composers and producers to instantly prove ownership of their music, is now available in India, PTI reports from London.

Hina Rizvi, an Indo-Canadian lawyer with years of experience in entertainment, intellectual property, and blockchain law, said she co-founded SongProof to ensure artists' rights are protected. It is designed for creators to receive a timestamped digital certificate tied directly to their song or lyrics, ensuring that with just a few clicks their work can not be stolen, altered or claimed by someone else. "Indian music powers cinema, streaming, and global culture — yet so many creators here still have no reliable way to protect their work," Rizvi said in a statement this week.

People watch the official opening ceremony of the Grand Egyptian Museum on a big screen in the downtown area near Tahrir Square in Cairo on Saturday. REUTERS

Egypt unveils grand museum

▸ Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Saturday opened the Grand Egyptian Museum, a long-awaited, billion-dollar showcase for pharaonic treasures, saying that its inauguration opened "a new chapter in history", AFP reports from Cairo.

"Today, as we celebrate together the opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum, we are writing a new chapter in the history of the present and the future, in the cause of this ancient homeland," Sisi told a gathering of princes, queens, heads of state and other dignitaries at a ceremony in the museum's square. Located just outside Cairo on the Giza Plateau, which also includes the three pyramids and the Sphinx, the museum will be the world's largest dedicated to a single civilisation. It will display over 50,000 artefacts detailing life in ancient Egypt.

B'desh dockers strike against govt

▸ Port workers staged a mass hunger strike on Saturday to protest the interim government's decision to lease out Bangladesh's main commercial seaport in Chattogram to foreign operators, PTI reports from Dhaka.

"The decision has been taken against the national interest. This decision will not be accepted under any circumstances," Anwar Hossain, leader of the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, said. The hunger strike came a month after the port workers began protests against the plan to lease out the New Mooring Container Terminal to UAE-based operator DP World.

US asks Asean to be firm in countering China

We must ensure that China is not seeking to dominate you, says Hegseth

KUALA LUMPUR (MALAYSIA), AP/PTI

US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth at the Asean Plus meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Saturday. REUTERS

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Saturday urged Southeast Asian nations to stand firm and strengthen their maritime forces to counter China's increasingly "destabilising" actions in the South China Sea.

Speaking at a meeting in Malaysia with his counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Hegseth reiterated US concern over what he called China's aggression in the disputed waters that intensified in recent months, citing incidents such as the ramming of vessels and the use of water cannons.

The South China Sea remains one of Asia's most volatile flashpoints. Beijing claims almost the entire region, while Asean members, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei also claim ownership of coastal areas and features. The Philippines, a key US ally, has had frequent clashes with China's maritime fleet.

Manila has repeatedly urged a stronger regional response, but Asean has traditionally sought to balance caution with economic ties to Beijing, the region's largest trading partner. Hegseth criticised Beijing's recent declaration of Scarborough Shoal, which China forcefully seized from the Philippines in 2012, as a "nature reserve."

"You don't put platforms on nature reserves," he said, describing China's activities on the uninhabited shoal. He told the meeting it was "yet another attempt to coerce new and expanded territorial and maritime claims at your expense." Hegseth said China's provocative actions challenged and threatened territorial sovereignty in the region.

"China's sweeping territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea fly in the face of their commitments to resolve disputes peacefully," he said. "We seek peace. We do not seek conflict. But we must ensure that China is not seeking to dominate you or anybody else."

China rejects US criticism of its maritime conduct, accusing Washington of interfering in regional affairs and provoking tensions. Chinese officials on Saturday slammed the Philippines for being a "troublemaker" after Manila staged drills with US, Australia and New Zealand.

American Hindu group asks Vance to 'engage with Hinduism'

NEW YORK, PTI

As US Vice President J D Vance continues to face criticism over his comments about his interfaith marriage with Second Lady Usha Vance, a Hindu organisation has said that as a Christian public figure, it is "reasonable" for him to acknowledge the positive impact of Hinduism and to "engage with Hinduism."

Vance has faced backlash over remarks he made regarding his interfaith marriage, after saying he eventually hopes that his wife Usha, who grew up in a Hindu household, "is somehow moved by the same thing that I was moved in by church."

"With respect, @JDVance, if your wife encouraged you to re-engage with your faith, why not reciprocate that and engage with Hinduism too?" the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) said in a post on X on Friday. "You are the VP. It's more than reasonable (and well within precedent) for a Christian public figure such as yourself to acknowledge the positive impact of Hinduism on Hindus and the rights of Hindus to practise," the Foundation added. Hitting back at his critics, Vance on Friday said it was his wife who encouraged him to re-engage with Christianity. "My wife — as I said at the TPUSA — is the most amazing blessing I have in my life. She herself encouraged me to re-engage with my faith many years ago," he said.

"She is not a Christian and has no plans to convert, but like many people in an interfaith marriage — or any interfaith relationship — I hope she may one day see things as I do," he said.

Responding to Vance's remark, the Hindu American Foundation issued a statement on Friday calling on him to engage with "Hinduism too" and said: "Hinduism doesn't share the need to wish your spouse to come around to see things as you do in terms of religion."

The HAF said: "Hinduism is inherently inclusive and pluralistic in this way. We do not seek to convert anyone. We embrace the idea that there are multiple ways of conceiving of the Divine."

US not to send any high-level officials to COP30

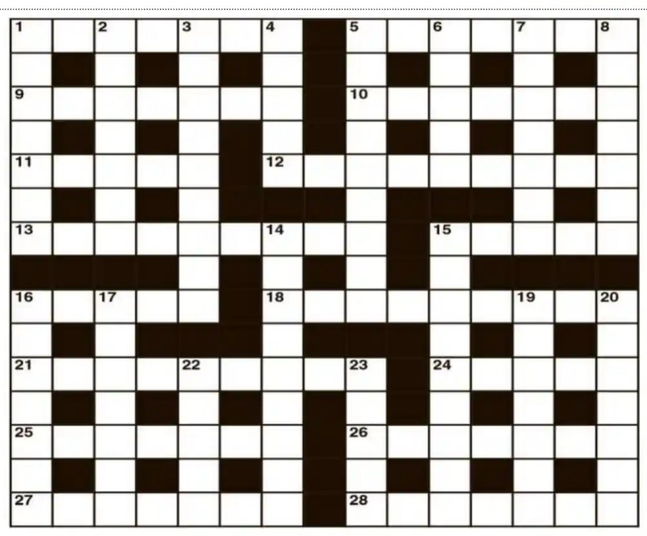
WASHINGTON, AFP: The United States will not send any top officials to the COP30 climate talks in Brazil later this month, a White House official said Saturday, as President Donald Trump instead works to boost fossil fuels.

Trump, who withdrew from the Paris climate agreement for a second time upon his return to the White House in January, had not been expected to attend a leaders' summit ahead of the annual UN climate conference in Belem. But it now appears he will not dispatch any top negotiators to the talks, to be held from November 10 to 21, either.

"The US is not sending any high level representatives to COP30," a White House official said. "The president is directly engaging with leaders around the world on energy issues, which you can see from the historic trade deals and peace deals that all have a significant focus on energy partnerships."

Brazil said Friday that fewer than 60 world leaders have confirmed they will attend the climate summit on November 6-7.

◆ SUNDAY CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 2652 ◆



ACROSS
1 Person held as security (7)
5 Happening now (7)
9 Dispose (7)
10 Branch of mathematics (7)
11 A hard abrasive powder (5)
12 Considerably (2,1,6)
13 Thoroughgoing (3-3-3)
15 Ostentatious (5)
16 Glass used in artificial gems (5)
18 A long way from home (3,6)
21 Possession (9)
24 A carrion-feeding carnivore (5)
25 Gradual wearing away (7)
26 To get round (7)
27 Case for the accused (7)
28 Tolerant (7)

DOWN
1 Bring ship to standstill (5,2)
2 Overfullness (7)
3 Vexation (9)
4 Bring to bear (5)
5 Moral strength (9)
6 Scoundrel (5)
7 Official suspension of trade (7)
8 Deeply sad event (7)
14 Slight possibility (3,6)
15 Place of refuge (4,5)
16 Go ahead (7)
17 Show of goodwill at departure (4-3)
19 Exalt in rank (7)
20 Local form of language (7)
22 Hold sway (5)
23 Roam in search of prey (5)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4012

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 9, Out of form 10, Hard to see 12, Lick 13, St-rove 14, W-a-RR-ant 15, Wrong date 17, Dis-penser 18, Re-count 19, Sighed(Side) 20, L-one 23, F-rightful 25, Overt-ired 26, Rose 27, Slip on 29, Sees fit 32, Talk tripe 34, Block-head 35, Lets out 36, E-v-ince 37, Stun(rev) 38, Sunbonnet 39, Disallows.
DOWN: 1, Follower 2, Stack of chips 3, Cont-R-act 4, I'm-pose 5, Sheep dog 6, Crowd scene 7, Star-t-ed 8, Best fri-end 11, Stays 16, Gauche 19, Sol 21, On reflection 22, Streak 23, First flush 24, Fell in-tent 25, O-W-n 28, Pres-ent-s 29, Spot cash 30, Ti-dine-SS 31, Stood on 33, LA-tin 34, B-L-inds.

EASY
ACROSS: 9, Wrongdoer 10, In the main 12, Fake 13, Apiece 14, Growler 15, Crocodile 17, Treasured 18, Dropped 19, Pirate 20, Zinc 23, Swiss roll 25, Preferred 26, Even 27, Romany 29, Spectre 32, Testament 34, Agreeable 35, Earnest 36, Deadly 37, Plum 38, Represent 39, Encounter.
DOWN: 1, Two-faced 2, Took no notice 3, Complied 4, Breeze 5, Director 6, Stag beetle 7, Remorse 8, Introduced 11, Abler 16, Oppose 19, Pal 21, Irritability 22, Recede 23, Sweetheart 24, On one's toes 25, Pay 28, Antidote 29, Surplice 30, Evermore 31, Wagered 33, Scrap 34, Amazed.

SU DO KU X - 3723

			3		6			
			9					8
6							7	9
			5	1				
					7	4		
2								
	4				8	3		
		2	4				1	
1				5	3			

SOLUTION TO 3722

5	9	3	4	2	8	6	7	1
6	4	7	3	5	1	9	2	8
2	8	1	9	7	6	5	4	3
8	5	6	2	1	4	7	3	9
9	7	4	6	3	5	1	8	2
3	1	2	8	9	7	4	6	5
4	3	9	5	6	2	8	1	7
1	6	5	7	8	3	2	9	4
7	2	8	1	4	9	3	5	6

To solve the puzzle:
The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Iyer discharged from hospital

NEW DELHI, AFP: India batsman Shreyas Iyer has been discharged from hospital after lacerating his spleen when falling heavily in a one-day clash against Australia, cricket officials said Saturday.

The 30-year-old vice-captain doubled over in pain after pulling off a sensational catch to remove Alex Carey in the third ODI in Sydney last week.

The Indian ODI vice-captain was forced off the field and hospitalised.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said Saturday that he is "now stable and recovering well", and that "he has been discharged from the hospital".

Sinner speeds past Zverev to seal final berth

PARIS, AFP: Jannik Sinner moved to within one win of reclaiming the world No. 1 ranking with a 6-0, 6-1 dismantling of an ailing Alexander Zverev in the Paris Masters semifinals on Saturday, setting up a final clash with Felix Auger-Aliassime.

The Italian raced to a remarkable thrashing of reigning champion Zverev at La Defense Arena in just 61 minutes.

Sinner will replace rival Carlos Alcaraz at the top of the rankings if he beats Auger-Aliassime on Sunday.

Auger-Aliassime has reached the second Masters 1000 final of his career.

Cathedral High lift U-16 title

BENGALURU, DHNS: Cathedral High School won the U-16 title of the Baldwin Shield inter-school football tournament by defeating Bishop Cotton Boys' School 2-0 in the final here on Saturday.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

Goals from Nigel Aaron (22') and Kevin Johnson (36') sealed the title for Cathedral High in the six-day tournament.

Meanwhile, Vidyashilp Academy and St Joseph's Boys' High School won the U-14 and U-12 titles respectively.

Results: U-16: Cathedral High School: 2 (Nigel Aaron 22nd, Kevin Johnson 36th) bt Bishop Cotton Boys' School: 0.
U-14: Vidyashilp Academy: 2 (Arth Sunil 28th, Naitik 16th) bt Ryan International School: 1 (Ryan Karubaiah 4th).
U-12: St Joseph's Boys' High School: 0 (3) bt Bishop Cotton Boys' School: 0 (1) in penalty shootout

DYES A emerge champions

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Department of Youth Empowerment & Sports A (DYES A) lifted the Hockey Karnataka League Championship trophy despite losing their final league match to Canara Bank 2-4 here on Saturday.

LOCAL HOCKEY

Results: Canara Bank: 4 (Pruthvi Raj GN 21st, Vinaya VS 27th, Krishnan 31st, 50th) bt DYES A: 2 (Desh Poovaiah AA 49th, Bipin BP 55th); DYES B: 2 (Mourya Thimmaiah 34th, Vachan HA 42nd) bt Karnataka State Police: 0.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

3rd T20I: Australia vs India **(1:45 pm). LIVE** on **Star Sports Network & JioHotstar.**

Women's WC Final: India vs South Africa **(3 pm). LIVE Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

1st 4-day game: India A vs South Africa A **(day 4, 9:30 am). LIVE** on **JioHotstar.**

Ranji Trophy: Tamil Nadu vs Vidarbha, Punjab vs Goa, Himachal Pradesh vs Hyderabad **(day 2, 9:30 pm). LIVE** on **JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL

EPL: West Ham vs Newcastle **(7:30 pm)**, Man City vs Bournemouth **(10 pm). LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

TENNIS

Paris Masters: Finals **(7:30 pm). LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network, Sony LIV.**

CRICKET WOMEN'S ODI WORLD CUP

History beckons INDIAN WOMEN

Harmanpreet and Co eye maiden World Cup as they run into South Africa

G KRISHNAN
NAVI MUMBAI

All stars seem to be aligned towards India bagging their maiden ICC Women's Cricket World Cup title in their third final appearance.

On Sunday here, though, India will not have it easy. Nor was their journey into the final. Along the way, they went through three consecutive losses starting with the three-wicket defeat to their final opponent South Africa. However, they pulled their way up in the back end of the league stage. India had some convincing victories against the usual suspects Pakistan and Sri Lanka but were found wanting against stronger opponents who finished above them in the final points table - - England, Australia and South Africa.

India also were at the wrong side of a world record successful chase by Australia in the league stage but rewrote that record in a memorable fashion on Thursday night against the same opponents to book the final berth, courtesy local girl Jemimah Rodrigues' unbeaten 127 and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's highest score in this edition (89)

India have seen more or less everything that's there in women's ODIs. All along, they have been reminded by the enthusiastic supporters that they bring the Cup home being the hosts, something what their male counterparts led by Mahendra Singh Dhoni did 14-and-a-half years ago at the Wankhede Stadium, about 40km from this year's final venue, DY Patil Stadium.

India have been playing good cricket when it mattered the most. They needed to win their last league match against New Zealand to qualify for the semifinal, which they did. They had to post the highest ever run chase to enter the final, which they accomplished by dethroning Australia, both coming here. In short, India have been peaking at the right time.

Familiar with the conditions and boosted by the manner in which India won against the odds in the semifinal, Harmanpreet could well be the first Indian captain to lift the Women's World Cup on Sunday night after Mithali Raj's two failed attempts in 2005 in South Africa and 2017 in England. Harmanpreet returning to form against Australia augurs well while she also has been served consistently well by the middle and lower middle order comprising Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh, Amanjot Kaur and Sneh Rana, not to mention Smriti Mandhana (389 runs) and Rodrigues at No. 3 in the last two matches.

While spin will continue to be India's key, the hosts will bank on Renuka Singh Thakur's Power Play strikes and pray Kranti Gaud, who began the World Cup with a lot of promise but been going for runs aplenty in the recent matches, will bowl a more disciplined length.

South Africa, like India, have had some bumpy rides en route to their maiden entry into a 50-over World Cup final, men or women. This being the year when their men's team won the World Test Championship final for their maiden ICC trophy, the Proteas women will be eager to replicate that in the longer white ball format on Sunday.

While they have been dismissed for double digit scores twice (69 by England and 97 by Australia), SA have also had some major batting performances, posting 300-plus and defending them through contributions from their top-order led ably by their captain Laura Wolvaardt, whose 169 priceless runs knocked four-time winners England out in the semifinal. With three other fifties, the SA opener is the highest run-getter in this tournament (470 at 67.14).

While a new world champion will emerge outside of Australia (7), England (4) and New Zealand (1) in this 13th edition, the team that absorbs pressure better will rise on the podium.

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS NETWORK, 3.00 PM

INDIA V SOUTH AFRICA IN WORLD CUPS

Year	Venue	Result
1997	Patna	Ind won by 5 wkts
2000	Christchurch	Ind won by 8 wkts
2005	Pretoria	Ind won by 4 wkts
2017	Leicester	SA won by 115 runs
2022	Christchurch	SA won by 3 wkts
2025	Visakhapatnam	SA won by 3 wkts

MOST RUNS IN 2025

1,317 S Mandhana (Ind)
976 P Rawal (Ind)
855 T Brits (SA)
818 L Wolvaardt (SA)
747 J Rodrigues (Ind)

India's results in World Cup finals

Year	Vs	Venue	Result
2005	Aus	Centurion	Lost by 98 runs
2017	Eng	Lord's	Lost by 9 runs

Record batting 1st in World Cup 2025

	INDIA	SOUTH AFRICA
Won	3	2
Lost	2	2

Record in run chases in World Cup 2025

	Won	Lost	No result
India	1	1	1
South Africa	4	0	0

Most wickets in 2025

D Sharma (Ind)	34
S Ecclestone (Eng)	28
S Rana (Ind)	28
N Mlaba (SA)	27
A King (Aus)	25

Compiled by **Arun Gopalakrishnan**

HARMANPREET KAUR
Indian women's team captain

"It's a proud moment for me and the entire team, and I'm sure the entire country must be also very proud the way we have played the last two games. We have been talking about that whenever we have enjoyed and given our best.

Jemimah Rodrigues pets a dog during a training session. PTI

The team is fully charged up: Kaur

G KRISHNAN
NAVI MUMBAI

Harmanpreet Kaur has led India to the final in her first Women's World Cup as a captain. But, this will be her second taste of entering the final, having been a runner-up to hosts England in 2017.

Using that experience and also learning from defeats in this edition, Kaur is confident of her team putting up a better show and winning their first World Cup title.

"I don't think there can be a better motivation than this. The team is fully charged up. We have been preparing for this for a long time. It's only about giving your hundred per cent and being there for the team," Kaur said on Saturday.

"We know how it feels after losing. But what you feel after winning is something we are really looking forward to. Hopefully, Sunday will be a special day for us."

With the expectations of winning the final coming from all corners, Kaur has been telling her team to just "enjoy" the moment of reaching the final.

"This is the biggest stage, the biggest opportunity for us playing in home conditions. The most important thing is that we have to enjoy this as this is the biggest thing in my life as a cricketer and as a captain," said Kaur, who has scored two fifties in seven innings this World Cup.

Kaur's South African counterpart Laura Wolvaardt said the pressure was on India to win the World Cup. "The whole crowd will be behind India, probably the entire stadium. It's going to be a very exciting opportunity. At the same time, it puts a lot of pressure on them as well. They have the whole country behind them and expect to win. It plays in our favour, hopefully. We are very excited for the game. We have to play some really good cricket to beat them."

Batting heavy Indians look to bounce back

HOBART, PTI

The Indian batters will breathe a little easier in the absence of Josh Hazlewood as they look to put up an improved performance, but the baffling omission of left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh continues to raise eyebrows ahead of the third T20 International against Australia on Sunday.

Hazlewood's pinpoint accuracy when it comes to hitting the right length, coupled with disconcerting bounce that he always generates around the corridor of uncertainty did become a bit of a nightmare for the Indian batters.

With the Ashes Test starting at the end of this month, Hazlewood has been given a break to rejuvenate before the gruelling five-Test series. He won't be part of the remainder of the series.

"It would obviously be a relief. I have never faced such bowling," star opener Abhishek Sharma had said after the Melbourne game as he seemed to be in awe of the Aussie speedster.

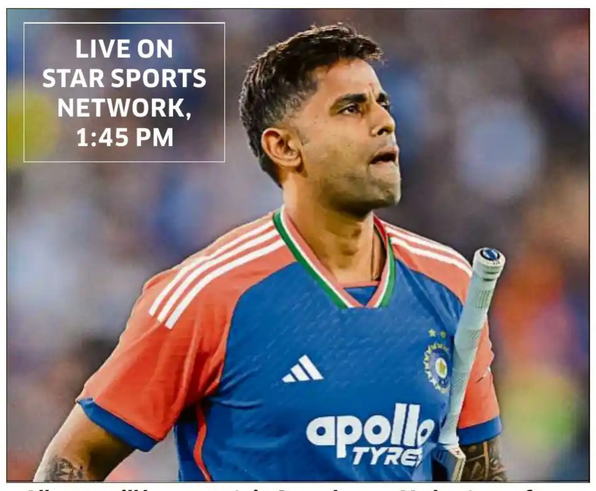
And his absence would also mean that Indian batters, who have serious technical flaws in dealing with bounce and seam movement, will feel a bit more assured while facing the likes of Xavier Bartlett, Nathan Ellis or Sean Abbott.

Both skipper Suryakumar Yadav and skipper-in-waiting Shubman Gill have had problems negotiating deliveries with extra bounce and good degree of seam movement. Surya and Gill would like to revisit their opening game's playbook when they looked in ominous touch at Canberra.

The Bellerive Oval at the Hobart is one ground where the side boundaries are smaller in size and hence the length would be paramount considering anything short would be flying over cover, point, square leg or mid-wicket on either side of the fence.

Bellerive Oval is the ground where the phenomenon of Virat Kohli as a champion ODI batter took shape back in 2012 when he played a masterful knock of 133 not out in 86 balls against Sri Lanka in a chase of 321. Bellerive Oval track has traditionally been a belter for white ball games.

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS NETWORK, 1:45 PM



All eyes will be on captain Suryakumar Yadav to perform when India take on Australia in the third T20I at the Bellerive Oval in Hobart on Sunday. AP/PTI

Game on after South Africa A's stunning collapse

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

After three days of fluctuating fortunes, the engrossing opening battle between India A and South Africa A continued to be in the balance as bowlers from both sides called the shots with spirited displays here on Saturday.

First it was India A's Tanush Kotian (4/26) and Anshul Kamboj (3/39) who stole the show, their street-smart performances coupled with reckless batting from South Africa A resulting in the visitors being bowled out for 199 in 48.1 overs at BCCI's Centre of Excellence.

The stunning collapse from South Africa A following a promising start on a fairly good batting pitch set India A a target of 275, but Proteas opening pacers Tshepo Moraki (2/12) and Okuhle Cele (1/40) bent their backs in admirable fashion on a scorching day to have the hosts in all sorts of trouble at 32/3.

Skipper Rishabh Pant (64 batting, 81b, 8x4, 2x6), blending aggression with caution in his inimitable style, and Rajat Patidar (28) then forged an 87-run stand for the fourth wicket to steady the ship, but the latter's dismissal late in the day saw India A take stumps at 119/4. With India A still needing 156 runs for victory, the stage is set up for a cracking final day.

India A's Tanush Kotian (right) celebrates taking a wicket. DH PHOTO/ KRISHNAKUMAR P S

When captain Pant joined forces with Patidar in the final session, things were really tense out in the middle. Moraki and Cele were going through a sizzling spell, hitting the right lines and lengths that caused a lot of discomfort for the India batters. The Protean duo kept it largely full and in and around the off-stump, constantly asking those difficult questions. They threw in the odd well-directed bouncers too, and Indians found the challenge a bit too difficult.

Teenage sensation Ayush Mhatre, who blazed away to a 76-ball 65 in the first innings, perished to a 9-ball 6, his expansive drive off Moraki resulting in the ball inside-edging onto the stumps. One-drop Devdutt Padikkal too committed the same error off Cele and the result was the exact same.

And it got worse for India A when Sai Sudharsan, who never looked comfortable in his 94-ball 32-run stay in the first essay, departed for 12 after a lack of footwork saw him being trapped LBW. India could have been four down had Jordan Hermann not grassed a sitter from Patidar off Cele.

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA A (I Innings): 309
INDIA (I Innings): 234
SOUTH AFRICA A (II Innings, O/n: 30/0): Jordan Hermann c Suthar b Brar 12 (45b, 1x4), Lesego Senokwane c Pant b Kotian 37 (83b, 7x4), Zubayr Hamza 37 (30b, 8x4), Marques Ackerman b Kotian 5 (13b), Rubin Hermann c Pant b Kamboj 15 (18b, 3x4), Rivaldo Moonsamy b Kamboj 6 (21b), Tiaan van Vuuren c Pant b Kamboj 3 (8b), Prenelan Subrayen 15 (31b, 1x4, 1x6), Tshepo Moreki c Sudharsan b Kotian 25 (24b, 3x4), Lutho Sipamla (not out) 17 (16b, 3x4), Okuhle Cele c Badoni b Brar 1 (6b). Extras (B-11, LB-8, W-1, NB-6) 26. TOTAL (all out, 48.1 overs) 199.
Fall of wickets: 1-30 (Jordan), 2-84 (Hamza), 3-103 (Ackermann), 4-104 (Senokwane), 5-122 (Rubin), 6-128 (Vuuren), 7-135 (Moonsamy), 8-177 (Moreki), 9-182 (Subrayen).
Bowling: Khaleel Ahmed 9-1-26-0, Anshul Kamboj 12-0-39-3, Manav Suthar 10-0-49-1, Gurnoor Brar 9.1-4-40-2, Tanush Kotian 8-3-26-4.
INDIA (II Innings): B Sai Sudharsan lbw Moreki 12 (38b, 2x4), Ayush Mhatre b Moreki 6 (9b, 1x4), Devdutt Padikkal 5 (15b, 1x4), Rajat Patidar c Moonsamy b Vuuren 28 (87b, 5x4), Rishabh Pant (batting) 64 (81b, 8x4, 2x6), Ayush Badoni (batting) 0 (6b). Extras (NB-2, W-2) 4. **TOTAL (for 4 wkts, 39 overs) 119.**
Fall of wickets: 1-12 (Mhatre), 2-19 (Padikkal), 3-32 (Sudharsan), 4-119 (Patidar).
Bowling: Tshepo Moreki 8-2-12-2, Okuhle Cele 8-1-40-1, Prenelan Subrayen 11-5-39-0, Lutho Sipamla 6-3-8-0, Tiaan van Vuuren 6-1-20-1.

Arsenal extend lead at the top; Manchester United held

LONDON, AFP: Arsenal brushed Burnley aside 2-0 on Saturday to open up a seven-point lead at the top of the Premier League as struggling Nottingham Forest held in-form Manchester United to a 2-2 draw.

Mikel Arteta's Gunners have won five league games in a row to position themselves as firm favourites to end their painful two-decade wait to be crowned English champions.

Viktor Gyokeres **(in pic)** headed Arsenal ahead following a Declan Rice corner in the first half at Turf Moor for his first league goal since mid-September -- yet more joy for the set-piece specialists.

England midfielder Rice himself headed home to double the visitors' lead in the 35th minute and put them in total control.

Results: Burnley: 0 lt to Arsenal: 2 (Gyokeres 14th, Rice 35th); Nottingham Forest: 2 (Gibbs-White 48th, Savona 50th) drew with Manchester United: 2 (Casemiro 34th, Diallo 81st); Brighton: 3 (Welbeck 11th, Gomez 64th, 70th) bt Leeds: 0; Crystal Palace: 2 (Mateta 30th, Collins 51st og) bt Brentford: 0; Fulham: 3 (Sessegnon 9th, Wilson 62nd, Mosquera 75th og) bt Wolves: 0

Mixed fortunes for Indians on the first day

MANISHA MOHITE

The first game of the first round of the FIDE World Cup 2025 brought in mixed results for India with reigning World junior Champion Pranav V, Suryashekhar Ganguly, Inayan P and Pranesh M scoring victories out of the 16 players who began their campaign on Saturday.

A draw on Sunday will suffice for these four to advance to the second round of this 206-player knock-out tournament.

The top 50 rated players including eight Indians are directly seeded into the second round which begins from November 4. This knock-out event will comprise of eight rounds with each player playing two classical games with alternate colours against the same opponent in each round. A tie-would be resolved under shorter time controls. SL Narayanan, Leon Mendonca, Raunak Sadhwani, Diptayan Ghosh, Karthi Venkataraman were held to draws as were Rohit Babu MR, Raja Rithvik will need a victory on Sunday in the second game of the first round to qualify.

Pranav V. X

Wild-card entrant and Women's World Cup winner Divya Deshmukh, the only female face in the tournament, ended on the losing side as did Aronyak Ghosh, Himal Gusain, Neelash Saha and Harshvardhan GB. All of them desperately need a victory to force a tie-break which will be played on Monday under shorter time controls. Turkish teen sensation Erdogmus Yagiz Kaan, all of 14-years who had hit the record books as the youngest ever to cross the Elo 2600 barrier, got off to a blazing start, winning in just 17 moves against much lower rated Abugenda Nagi. Former World Champion finalist Vassily Ivanchul also started on a winning note while another young sensation, 12-yer-old Oro Faustino, drew against Antr Brkic. Divya did not appear in any comfort for most part of the game against Stamatis Kourkou of Greece, who employed the Nimzo Indian defence. Severely short of time, Divya had to watch helplessly as Black gained an advantageous position with a passed pawn on the Queen side. Kourkov played accurately to pocket the point after 41 moves with both of his rooks escorting the passed pawn to the queening square

Round 1.1 Results (Only Indian players): GM Kazybek Nogerbek (KAZ) drew GM Raja Rithvik R; IM Harshavardhan G B lost to GM Mustafa Yilmaz (TUR); IM Steven Rojas Salas (PER) drew GM S L Narayanan; GM Pranav Venkatesh bt Ala Eddine Boulrens (ALG); GM Iniyan Pa bt GM Dylan Isidro Berdayes Ason (CUB); GM Max Warmerdam (NED) drew GM Lalitbabu Rohit; GM Xiongjian Peng (CHN) drew GM Diptayan Ghosh; GM Roberto Garcia Pantoja (COL) drew GM Karthik Venkataraman; GM Raunak Sadhwani drew GM Daniel Barrish (RSA); GM Georg Meier (URU) bt IM Neelash Saha; GM Leon Luke Mendonca drew IM Shixu Wang B (CHN); GM Surya Sekhar Ganguly bt GM Ahmad Ahmadzada (AZE); GM Divya Deshmukh lost to GM Stamatis Kourkoulos-Arditis (GRE); GM Pranesh M bt IM Satbek Akhmedinov (KAZ); GM Mateusz Bartel (POL) bt IM Aronyak Ghosh; GM Andy Woodward (USA) bt IM Himal Gusain.

BUTTER FINGERS National team across all three formats has seen its catching standards slip in recent times

India's DROPPING standards

Indian players being put through session of catching during the Australia tour. AFP

MADHU JAWALI
BENGALURU, DHNS

From escorting the ball to the boundary to pulling off acrobatic saves, the Indian men's cricket team has made remarkable strides in fielding over the years. Several players now rank among the best in the world, inspiring a new generation to treat fielding with the same seriousness as batting or bowling. Yet, despite its growing importance, fielding has not fully become ingrained in India's cricketing culture. Much like extreme weather patterns in an era of climate change, the team's fielding performances swing between excellence and mediocrity.

For a side currently ranked No. 1 in both ODIs and T20Is -- and one that has captured two major ICC white-ball titles (the T20 World Cup and the Champions Trophy) while also reaching the 50-over World Cup final since 2023 -- its catching standards remain surprisingly sub-par. The flair seen in batting and the craft displayed in bowling often vanish when it comes to fielding, especially catching. Nothing highlights this inconsistency more starkly than their dismal 67.5% catching rate in the Asia Cup in September, a figure only better than Hong Kong's 52.1%. In contrast, even teams like the UAE (85.7%) and Oman (76.4%) were far ahead.

"I agree, it's blow hot and blow cold," former India fielding coach R Sridhar tells DHoS. "But I think that the microscopic scrutiny and the added pressure and all, it doesn't help. You saw Australia women, they dropped a couple of easy catches the other night. So every team kind of drops catches, it happens. It happens to the best of the best. But yes, the one point is blow hot, blow cold. We had this brilliant Asia Cup final, but before that we dropped 12 catches in whatever matches. So the challenge is to find more consistency."

In the Asia Cup, they at least had the excuse of "ring of fire" (a reference to the floodlight system at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium), but the trend has continued in Australia as well. While dropping catches under lights, which is relatively a lot more difficult, is bad enough, spilling them during daylight is unacceptable at this level. Sridhar points out two reasons that can't be fixed immediately.

Different players for different formats and the tight international schedule, especially for the Indian team.

Kuldeep Yadav

Abhishek Sharma

"If you see across formats, the players are different," Sridhar begins. "It's not easy for the team management and the staff to keep on churning out the players. Different players are coming in different formats. The needs are different, practices are different, communication lines are different and the skill sets are different. So a lot of things have to be managed. It's not an excuse. It has to be done. What has to be done has to be done."

Having worked with the Indian team for four years, what are the challenges you have faced in your job?

"The most difficult thing about the job is the time," he points out. "You finish a Test match on 14th of October, take a flight on 15th, land on 16th night, you have two nights to adjust in Perth, 19th you are playing a high pressure game. So where is the time? And you tell me, when there are two days of practice available, will the players focus on their primary skill or will they worry too much about their fielding? There is a lot of balance that needs to be made. There is no time. The calendar is set. I think we need to get better, that is something that we need to do. But just cut some slack (for the players)."

That said, India will have to find a way to improve their catching standards. No team has dominated world cricket for a prolonged period with below-par fielding abilities. In the recent Test series in England, India dropped as many as 23 catches out of 45 that came their way, effectively grassing every second offer. You can't expect to win a series by wasting so many chances against a good team.

Structured system

Indian white-ball teams have also seen several players graduate from IPL - whether they are mystery bowlers or big hitters. Many of them don't come to IPL from a structured system. They could be late bloomers who are spotted by IPL scouts in domestic cricket. Typically, they would have focused on one skill rather than all-round development. Such players get badly exposed in international cricket.

"Your grassroot level and your pathway are very very important," says Sridhar. "Someone who comes through a proper pathway, they are a little more complete cricketers when they make their debuts rather than someone who comes through an accelerated pathway. There always is going to be some kind of a gap in their game. Because they are accelerated based on certain skills... You take a Varun Chakravarthy, despite being 30-31, when he reaches his peak, he is struggling due to multiple reasons, physical injuries or whatever. He is not the best. None of your bowlers are bullets on the ground. They are safe. Like (Jasprit) Bumrah is safe, but he is not the fastest. Kuldeep (Yadav) is safe and he is a much-improved fielder now."

It is also to do with the mentality wherein the fielding is looked at as something less productive compared to batting and bowling, especially in the age of IPL. While there is a definite shift in attitude towards fielding, it needs to be a part of team culture something that, Sridhar says, he has been emphasising upon.

"The team needs to have a culture code. It's very important. Democratically made culture code and everyone should adhere to those standards. Also, this culture code shouldn't be just with the national team. It has to be the same with the first-class team and the IPL teams that they are playing for. Fielding culture code has to be in the national programme. Those who come with the proper pathway, they are all good. You see many of the players who come through the proper pathway, which is the Centre of Excellence, under-19 and stuff like that, they are mostly good."

Until that systemic change takes root, India's fielding will continue to yo-yo between brilliance and blunder. Fielding cannot remain an afterthought, a perfunctory carried out between batting and bowling stints.

It must be devoted due importance at every level, from age-group cricket to the National team.

Galahad wins main event

BENGALURU RESULTS

Suleiman Attaollahi-trained Galahad and ridden by Antony Raj won the Rajyotsava Trophy, the feature event of the opening day of the Bangalore winter races on Saturday.

1. Inauguration Plate - 1400M: Feeling Good (Lakshman Gowda) Aleemuddin 1; Honeypot (Vivek) 2; Southernaristocrat (Hindu Singh) 3; Lorven's Glory (Angad) 4; Not Run: Forever Royal. WB: 7-1/4, 1,3/4L. T: 1:26.72. Tote: Rs 13w; Rs 10, 26, 11p; Fc: Rs 131; Q: Rs 99; Shp: Rs 79; Thp: Rs 28; Tri: Rs 345 & 121. Exacta: Rs 2,057 & 1,234. TB: Lokanath. Fav: Feeling Good.

2. Kentucky Plate - 1200M: Cashable (Koushik Dutta) Suraj Narredu 1; Solara (G Vivek) 2; Rocking Star (Aleemuddin) 2, ; Zephrine (Arvind Kumar). Not Run: Mnemosyne. WB: 1/2, 3-1/4, 1-3/4L. T: 1:12.64. Tote: Rs 28w; Rs 12, 10, 33p; Fc: Rs 61; Q: Rs 23; Shp: Rs 27; Thp: Rs 102; Tri: Rs 442 & 394; Exacta: Rs 1,003 & 244. TB: Rajesh Narredu Fav: Solara.

3. Kudremukh Plate - 1400M: Sunshine (Saleem Jasdanwalla) Pavan 1; Final Call (Antony Raj) 3; Larissa (G.Vivek) 3; Night Raider (Arvind Kumar) 4; WB: 3-3/4, 3-1/2, 1L. T: 1:24.57. Tote: Rs 13w; Rs 10, 12, 18p; Fc: Rs 27; Q: Rs 20; Shp: 18; Thp: Rs 35; Tri: Rs 62 & 35; Ex: Rs 99 & 45. TB: Irfan Ghatala. Fav: Sunshine.

4. Belagaum Plate - 1200M: Excellent Lass (Daulat Chabria) Suraj Narredu 1; Regal Reality (G.Vivek) 2; Stellantis (Shreyas Singh) 3; Jersey King (Pavan) 4. Not Run: Elfin Knight. WB: 1-1/2, 1-1/4, 2L. T: 1:11.44. Tote: Rs 17w; Rs 13, 11p; Fc: Rs 24; Q: 14; Shp: Rs 20; Thp: Rs 37; Tri: Rs 96 & 50; Ex: Rs 100 & 26. TB: Rajesh Narredu. Fav: Excellent Lass.

5. Rajyotsava Trophy - 1400M: Galahad (Sarainaga Racing Ltd) Antony Raj 1; Imperial Blue (Arvind Kumar) 2; Kalamitsi (G Vivek) 3; Iron Clad (Suraj Narredu) 4. WB: 2-3/4, 1, 1-3/4L. T: 1:23.76. Rs 23w; Rs 12, 13p; Fc 66; Q: Rs 31; Shp: Rs 26; Thp: Rs 33; Tri: Rs 229 & 187; Ex: Rs 270 & 62. TB: Suleiman Attaollahi. Fav: Imperial Blue.

6. Jayant M Shah Memorial Trophy -1400M: Rieko (P Arun Kumar) Suraj Narredu 1; Alamgir (Arvind Kumar) 2; Small Dreams (Aleemuddin) 3; Flight Of Fancy (Antony Raj) 4; WB: 4-1/4, Lnk, 3/4L. T: 1:23.89. Tote: Rs 31w; Rs 10, 20, 22p; Fc: Rs 261; Q: Rs 133; Shp: Rs 66; Thp: Rs 56; Tri: Rs 2,039 & 769; Ex: Rs 4,135 & 1,181. TB: Pradeep Annaiah. Fav: Elysium.

7. Dudhsagar Falls Plate - 1200M: Sapporo (Rajendran) Pavan 1; Amalure (Sai Kiran) 2; Magestic Persona (Ramu) 3; Annabelle (Antony Raj) 4. WB: 1/2, 1-1/2L, Hd T: 1:13.18. Tote: Rs 19w; Rs 14, 45, 15p; Fc: Rs 596; Q: Rs 403; Shp: Rs 133; Thp: Rs 40: Tri: Rs 1,639 & 338; Exacta: Rs 4,708 & 1,513. TB: Irfan Ghatala. Fav: Sapporo.

Jackpot: Rs 666 (659). **Runner-up:** Rs 94 (2004). **I Treble:** Rs 52 (175). **II Treble:** Rs 251 (49).

TENNIS

Bopanna hangs up his racquet

After a singles stint, the Kodava excelled as a doubles exponent on the tour

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The 45-year-old Rohan Bopanna bid adieu to his 22-year-old tennis career on Saturday. PTI FILE PHOTO

For the near and dear ones, he is 'Bops' or 'Bopsi'. For the fans who adored his game, he will always remain 'Bofors'.

Loved for his genial personality and known for his relentless pursuit of excellence, one of the most popular Indian tennis players - Rohan Bopanna - hung his racquet on Saturday after wielding it for more than two decades on the ATP Tour.

In his farewell message titled 'A Goodbye.. But Not The End' on his social media handles, the 45-year-old summarised his long tennis journey through a four-page note. And rightly so, the former world No. 1, two-time doubles Grand Slam champion, three-time Olympian began by saying: "How do you bid farewell to something that gave your life its meaning?".

The Kodava was 11 years old when he started playing tennis in his hometown Coorg - the coffee land in the Western Ghats of Karnataka. His first big break would come 11 years later when Bopanna received his maiden call-up to represent India at the Davis Cup before he steadily began to find his foot on the professional tour. From ATP Challenger series to the Slams, the lanky 6 feet 4 inches athlete initially dabbled his luck both in singles and doubles before completely switching to the latter in the late 2000s.

At a time when doubles was hogging all the limelight because of his seniors Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander Paes, Bopanna, with his torpedo-serve that packed a plenty of punch, made head turns and stole spotlight for his power, skillful net play, one-handed backhand and controlled aggression.

"Starting my journey from a small town of Coorg in India, chopping blocks of wood to strengthen my serve, jogging through coffee estates to build stamina and chasing dreams on cracked courts to standing under the lights of the biggest arenas in the world - it feels surreal," Bopanna wrote in the note.

If his first ATP Challenger Series win came in 2003 while partnering Pakistan's Aisam-ul-Qureshi at the Denver Challenger, the right-handed Bopanna played his final match with partner Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan at the Paris Masters this week where he lost in the opening round.

In his 22-year-old career, Bopanna won the French Open mixed doubles title with Canadian partner Gabriela Dabrowski in 2017 before capturing the Australian Open men's doubles trophy with Aussie Matthew Ebden in 2024. A few months before his second Grand Slam victory, the Indo-Aussie pair had won the 2023 Indian Wells.

At an age when most people struggle to maintain physical fitness, the wins during the late 2023 and early 2024 seasons saw the Karnataka man become the oldest ATP Masters champion and the oldest world No. 1 in doubles at 43 years old. It was a feat that gave him another life on the court following his fair share of injuries over the years on the demanding tennis tour.

However, Bopanna had a forgettable 2025 after parting ways with Ebden at the end of 2024. Without a constant partner, the Indian only made it to one final this year at the ATP 500 Japan Open with local man Takeru Yuzuki with the duo finishing as runners-up.

Battling advancing years and having already ended his India career after the Paris Olympics and Davis Cup in 2023, Bopanna's final goodbye as a pro comes as no surprise. And his adios wasn't without thanking each an every person who helped him live his dream.

FACTFILE

- Majors
- Men's Doubles: Winner at Australian Open (2024), Runner-up at US Open (2010, 2023)
- **Mixed Doubles: Winner at French Open (2017), Runner-up at Australian Open (2018, 2023)**
- Other doubles titles: ATP Masters: Indian Wells Champion (2023)
- **ATP Finals: Runner-up (2012, 2015)**
- Career Highlights
- **Doubles career titles: 26**
- Doubles career record: 537-406
- **Peak ATP Doubles Ranking: World No. 1 (29 January, 2024)**

Karun's ton puts Karnataka on top

Visitors reach 319/3 at stumps on day 1 against Kerala

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karun Nair extended his rich vein of form with another brilliant hundred, while Smaran R and Shrijith KL scored solid half-centuries as Karnataka took the opening day's honours at the KCA Cricket Ground in Mangalapuram in their third Ranji Trophy Elite Group B fixture against Kerala on Saturday.

Having slumped to 13/2 in 7.3 overs, previous game's centurion Karun (142 not out) was once again at his best and Karnataka's batting sensation Smaran (88 not out), having been cheaply dismissed in Shivamogga, scored a fluent fifty as the visitors went into stumps at 319 for three in 90 overs.

In the middle of a slump and fighting for a spot, Shrijith also chipped in with 65, smashing 10 fours. The 29-year-old was involved in a 123-run partnership with Karun and bailed Karnataka out of a precarious situation early in the first session and shifted the momentum in the visitors' favour.

Earlier, opener Aneesh KV (8) was brought into the side on the back of Nikin Jose's poor form as Karnataka opted to bat first, having recalled Shikhar Shetty and Mohsin Khan back into the XI for Abhilash Shetty and Yashovardhan Parantap.

However, it did not take long for Kerala's MD Nidheesh to draw first blood as Mayank Agarwal (5) edged one to Mohammed Azharuddeen in the fifth over.

Basil NP struck soon after, as he dismissed Aneesh, again caught off Azharuddeen, to have Karnataka two down and in a lot of trouble.

SCOREBOARD

KARNATAKA (I Innings): Aneesh KV c Azharuddeen b Basil 8; Mayank Agarwal c Azharuddeen b Nidheesh 5; Shrijith KL c Ahammed b Aparajith 65; Karun Nair (batting) 142; Smaran R (batting) 88; Extras (B-4, LB-5, NB-2) 11; **TOTAL (for 3 wkts, 90 overs) 319.**

Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Agarwal), 2-13 (Aneesh), 3-136 (Shrijith).

Bowling: MD Nidheesh 16-4-41-1, Vaisakh Chandran 10-0-42-0, Nedumankuzhy Basil 16-2-58-1, Harikrishnan 14-0-69-0, Baba Aparajith 23-2-65-1, Akshay Chandran 11-0-35-0.

Group B brief scores: Punjab: 215/5 in 87 overs (Uday Saharan 100 n.o., Salil Arora 51 n.o.; Deepraj Gaonkar 2-22) vs Goa (New Chandigarh); Madhya Pradesh: 64/1 in 27 overs (Harsh Gawli 32 n.o., Himanshu Mantri 28 n.o.) vs Chandigarh (Indore); Maharashtra vs Saurashtra: First day was washed out without a ball being bowled. (Nasik).

Karun Nair scored 142 not out against Kerala . DH FILE PHOTO

Pesi-ward Psychic Star favourite for RWITC Trophy

PUNE SELECTIONS

Pesi Shroff-trained Psychic Star and ridden by Vivek G is fancied to win the RWITC Ltd Trophy, the feature event on the concluding day of the races on Sunday.

1. Pune Cantonment Board Trophy (Div III) - 1200M: Mila 1, Red Mist 2, Samson 3.
2. Delhi Race Club Trophy - 1200M: Turn And Burn 1, Credence 2, Son Of A Gun 3.
3. B.Prakash Salver - 1400M: Encino 1, Mr Brainwash 2, Treat 3.
4. Pune Cantonment Board Trophy (Div II) - 1200M: Flashman 1, Believe 2, Majestic Warrior 3.
5. General Rajendrasinghji Million - 1600M: Giacomo 1, Rosario 2, Miracle Of Hanukah 3.
6. Mayor Baburao Sanas Memorial Million - 1000M: Starlight Serenade 1, Blue Eyed Boy 2, Menorca 3.
7. RWITC Ltd Trophy - 2000M: Psychic Star 1, Redefined 2, Dream Alliance 3.
8. Aster Rose Plate - 1800M: Alexandria 1, Yuletide 2, Silver Briad 3.
9. Pune Cantonment Board Trophy (Div I) - 1200M: Foujita 1, Chardikala 2, Star Impact 3.
10. Bronx Plate - 1100M: Mirae 1, Prince Igor 2, Arbitrage 3.
Day's best: Foujita. **I Jackpot:** 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. **II Jackpot:** 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. **I Treble:** Rs 4, 5, 6. **II Treble:** 7, 8, 9. **III Treble:** 8, 9, 10.

Inter Kashi lift I-League title after CAS verdict

BAMBOLIM, PTI: The All India Football Federation on Saturday finally presented a replica of the I-League trophy to Inter Kashi, six months after handing the same silverware to Churchill Brothers at the same Goa venue, following a ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport that declared the debutants as the rightful champions.

The AIFF made the presentation after Kashi's final group league Super Cup match against Jamshedpur FC at the GMC Athletic Stadium here, bringing closure to a prolonged legal battle that had overshadowed one of the most dramatic I-League seasons.

CULTURE AND COSMOS

Lying flat: Why are the young giving up on life?

Shaifali Sandhya
is an international psychologist, former professor, and writer on culture, cosmopolitanism, and global affairs

"I wonder about others like me... fine on the outside but rotting on the inside," wrote Baek Se-Hee, 35, a South Korean author who died two weeks ago after a struggle with depression. In Berlin, leaders at the World Health Summit confronted a pressing question: why are our young people dying before their time?

Youth is meant to be life's safest stage, yet it has become increasingly fragile across Asia, Africa, and the Americas. We once believed education, growth, and technology would shield the next generation. Instead, the young – ostensibly the healthiest among us – are dying at alarming rates.

Suicide has risen to become the third leading cause of death among individuals aged 15-29. Each year, it claims nearly 727,000 lives, with 73% occurring in low- and middle-income countries. Moreover, an OpenAI blog post revealed that hundreds of thousands of ChatGPT users send messages each week that reflect suicidal thoughts or plans. These figures are staggering, and the regional disparities are even more concerning.

In South Korea, suicide has surpassed cancer as the leading cause of death among young people, although the circumstances surrounding Se-Hee's death were not disclosed. India accounts for one in four suicides worldwide, and youth in India face double the global risk, with one in six deaths among 15-29-year-olds attributed to suicide.

Although crude suicide rates vary, their impact on youth mortality is disproportionately high. The suicide rate among women aged 15-29 in India is the highest of any age group. Indian women, despite representing less than one-fifth of the world's female population, account for over one-third of all female suicides. While some studies suggest that men have higher suicide rates, limitations in data collection challenge these findings. The despair faced by Indian women is deepened by gender-specific challenges such as dowry, domestic violence, and limited access to mental health support.

Today's youth are grappling with a variety of stressors, including environmental exposures, poor diet, social anxieties, and lifestyle changes that undermine mental health. Chronic diseases once associated with old age – such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney failure, and cancers linked to ultra-processed diets – are becoming increasingly common among the young. Though unique cultural stressors exist, loneliness has reached epidemic levels. The climate movement, which initially inspired the activism of Generation Z and Millennials, has devolved into fatigue.

The result is generational trauma among the youth – a group that feels socially isolated yet bears society's hopes for the future; physically vulnerable, and politically disempowered. A harsh reality of alienation, isolation, and precariousness has replaced the promise of rights and agency. In China, millions of young people have responded to relentless social and economic pressure by adopting the "lying flat" (or *tang ping*) movement, which rejects a life defined solely by productivity. What began as a quiet protest against burnout has evolved into a broader generational statement of exhaustion and existential defiance.

Despair that exceeds one's capacity to cope is preventable. However, the systems meant to protect life are faltering, leading to dwindling access to care. Fewer than one in four people with depression in low- and middle-income countries receive treatment, and one in seven 1-19-year-olds worldwide lives with a mental disorder. The neglect comes at a cost: the World Health Organisation estimates that every $1 invested in treating depression and anxiety yields $4 in productivity gains. India lost $38 billion (approximately 1.3% of GDP), a 2025 study reports, due to adolescent illness in 2021, with over half attributed to non-communicable diseases.

We can begin by integrating mental health services into primary care, screening for depression, suicide risk, and substance use during every clinic visit. Establish district-level suicide prevention units with trained, funded staff to handle data collection and crisis response. Invest in sustainable financing – similar to investments that have yielded victories over infectious diseases. Improve surveillance by creating a suicide registry that connects health bodies, law enforcement, and social services. Institutionalise prevention by incorporating life skills, emotional literacy, and gender sensitivity into school and community programmes. These initiatives may provide a generation desperately seeking purpose with a reason to thrive.

Our next significant public health crisis will not be viral; it will be psychological – an erosion of purpose and belonging. The future won't be lost to war or disease but to a generation that no longer finds a reason to stay.

"I want to die, but I also want to eat tteokbokki," wrote Se-Hee. Her poignant statement encapsulates the paradox at the heart of suicidality. The desire to escape pain while still yearning to taste life, amid all the complexities of relatedness, captures our collective failure. The young have not lost the will to live. It is we – societies – that have lost the will to protect them.

THE DIGITAL ALARMIST

Masks off: Statecraft of terror

Ever since 9/11, the word 'terrorist' has entered the vocabulary of many nations across the globe and is used by leaders to label any individual or organisation that they feel does not adhere to their own narrow definitions of what constitutes acceptable behaviour in any sphere of human activity – economic, political, social, religious, or anything else.

The US 'war on terror' seems to have no boundaries, either within its own borders or outside. In the past two weeks, US war planes (and drones operated by nameless, faceless individuals sitting in front of computer terminals) have attacked fishing boats in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and killed civilians, using as justification that the boats were being operated by 'narco-terrorists' who bring drugs to the US. It is only a matter of time before the US starts attacking Central and Latin America because drug cartels are known to operate in countries such as Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia. By the same line of reasoning, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand (the so-called 'golden triangle') would be next in line to face the wrath of the US. During the Cold War, the most dreaded descriptors of individuals and organisations were 'Communist', 'Red', and 'fellow traveller' – these were designations guaranteed to ensure the destruction of those labelled such.

Even within the US, the labelling of antifascist groups, pro-Palestine protesters, and anti-fossil fuel climate-change advocates as terrorists has become part of US statecraft. How long will it be before the illegal immigrants (and many legal immigrants and US citizens) are labelled as terrorists, picked up off the streets, and deported to third countries by mask-wearing ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents? There is documented evidence of ICE agents detaining journalists and other citizens for photographing their operations, in total violation of constitutionally guaranteed rights of free speech and assembly. Curiously enough, many states in the US have banned the wearing of masks in public by citizens, unless they belong to law enforcement agencies.

Roger Marshall
is a computer scientist, a newly minted Luddite and a cynic

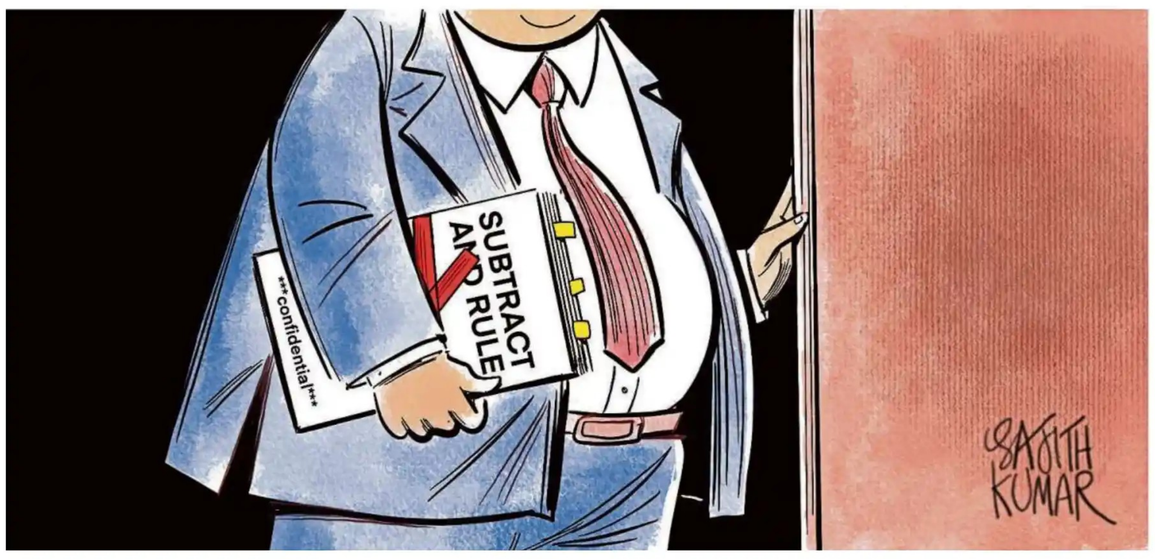
Halfway across the globe, a similar state of affairs obtains in Israel. By labelling Hamas and Hezbollah as terrorist organisations, Israel has been justifying its concerted efforts to eradicate them. Israel's genocidal activities in Gaza can only be labelled as the actions of a terrorist state, but no major European power has called it such. Islamophobia has many adherents, and the arms industry stands to benefit greatly, so it would seem. Israel has the distinction of being among the countries that have assassinated the highest number of people.

If any two countries considered themselves truly exceptional, they would have to be the United States and Israel. There are a great many commonalities between the two countries, be it in how they were birthed as nations or how they have conducted themselves over the years of their existence vis-à-vis other nations. If 'manifest destiny' was the guiding principle in the territorial expansion of America from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, 'Greater Israel or Revisionist Zionism' has been the guiding principle in Israel's stated objective to annex Gaza, the West Bank, and parts of Lebanon.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that, in many nations, individuals as well as parties that currently hold power are but sanitised versions of their previous avatars, i.e., once labelled as terrorists or terrorist organisations. While the Taliban is a good example, an even better example is provided by Israel. Netanyahu's party, Likud, traces its origin to the Irgun, a Zionist paramilitary organisation, which committed numerous terrorist acts against Palestinian Arabs. Hannah Arendt (she coined the phrase 'banality of evil') and Albert Einstein compared Irgun and its successor Herut party to "Nazi and fascist parties" and described Irgun as a "terrorist, right-wing, chauvinist organisation". Herut is the political predecessor of the Likud party.

There has been a proposal mooted by a Florida politician calling for the deportation of all Indian immigrants in the US. Given the current administration in Washington, it is totally within the realm of possibility. After all, Indians were summarily ejected from Uganda during Idi Amin's regime; they were also thrown out, not once but twice, from Myanmar.

If Iran's Revolutionary Guard can be labelled as a terrorist organisation, why not ICE? Or Mossad?



THE LIVING STREAM

The unsung talent of Mogalli Ganesh

Two years ago, when Mogalli Ganesh learnt he had to be hospitalised, he turned to his friends near him in desperation: "Get me 2,000 sheets of paper!" The sixty-year-old Kannada writer had already published extensively across several genres – short stories, novels, cultural criticism, poetry, and street plays – and had edited multiple volumes of both fiction and non-fiction. He went on to publish two novels, a long prose poem, and an autobiography, and to bring out a collection of his previously uncollected essays, *Dalit Janapada* (folklore), through his newly launched publishing venture, shortly before he passed away last month. A collection of his short short stories – born of his experiment with a new form – remains unpublished.

Written in his late twenties, Mogalli's early stories drew instant attention for the distinctive power and the style of their prose. I doubt any other Kannada short fiction anthology since has stirred as much excitement as his debut anthology, *Buguri* (1992), that P Lankesh published with an utterly improbable yet oddly effective cover featuring a photo of the torso of a semi-nude woman in slim underwear. Mostly set in the linguistic idiom of Channapatna taluk, where he spent his childhood, his debut stories – some of which are available in English translation, including *The Top, A Pair of Old Shorts, My Grandfather Had a Wish, and The Paddy Harvest* – blend raw and comic elements in high-energy prose while sustaining a tragic undertone.

Mogalli was born into a Dalit family, and his stories often take place in Dalit communities, but it is impossible to call him a Dalit writer. His fictional probes are open and take unexpected turns, and seek to fathom experiential depths in ways that make prefixing a social identity to him limiting as well as distorting. His stories do not subordinate experience to ideological aims. Conversations with the soft-spoken Mogalli were always refreshing, for he regarded literature – and the world at large – as deserving of our fullest curiosity and empathy.

After completing his higher studies in economics and folklore in Mysore, Mogalli joined Kannada University, Hampi, as a faculty member, where he remained until his retirement two years ago. His capacious humanism and deep commitment to literature kept him away from literary and political factions – a distance that, in the end, proved costly, inviting indifference to his work from those gatekeeping camps. His free criticisms of fellow writers and scholars added to this unfortunate situation. Insufficient intellectual engagement with his works, especially his scholarly writings, also did not help. Surely, the Kannada academic world could have yielded at least a scholar or two attentive to Mogalli's writings. Amid everything, he drew quiet solace from the loving care of his wife and three daughters.

Chandan Gowda
The Vidyashilp Professor looks for new ways of looking
@Chandan_Gowda73

Mogalli hoped to find newer audiences for his stories through English translations. A couple of translators whom I had helped identify for this task gave up soon enough. His prose style indeed is very hard to translate into English. We were trying to narrow in on a third one a few days before he died. But we had found someone to translate his autobiography, *Naanembudu Kinchittu* (I, the least, 2023), a stunning literary achievement.

Reminiscent of the prose style seen in his debut anthology, this consciousness-expanding narrative though proves a novel achievement through its effortless weaving of the real and surreal elements. His lived experiences are laid down as a succession of episodes more through vivid images and metaphors and evocations of mood than facts. Dedicated to "his mother's sigh," Mogalli's life-account retains a mystery and wonder about the world even while reliving the sorrow of his brutalised childhood, in particular, the cruelty of his father and grandmother.

His memories of his loving mother and stately grandfather, his adventures in a burial ground, and the exhilarating rides on his "donkey-moped," among other inspired episodes, are rendered with virtuoso skill and mark a special achievement in the art of memoir. There is nothing quite like it in Kannada, or perhaps in any other Indian language. Mogalli is gone, but he has left behind a lot, a hell of a lot.

ABROAD AT HOME

Adani's under fire. We've seen this before

The repeated, withering attacks on the Adani group are getting to be tiresome. Partly because they usually have no merit *per se*, and partly because the Western habit of weaponising the narrative is now so evident, with the pliant media manufacturing consent to support foreign policy.

In a recent column in the *Financial Times*, Janan Ganesh wrote: "Politics, not tech, makes the world go around". He may have a point, but at the moment, it is the opposite: the breakneck GenerativeAI race, and China's near-monopoly in rare earths, are fuelling both trade wars and capitulation: for example, Trump said "the G2 will be convening shortly". TACO, anyone?

I said during Biden's days in "A US-China condominium dividing up the world between themselves", that for the Deep State, a G2 would be a convenient (short-term) thing to do. Trump apparently has accepted that a) Chinese leverage is insurmountable and b) a division into spheres of influence would work best. Sadly, it would be disastrous for the US (and the Quad) in the medium term to make China Asia's hegemon.

But it is happening. As BNP Paribas puts it in a research note quoted by the *Financial Times*, "[Washington]... is now dealing with a peer rival capable of imposing material economic harm on it – a relatively new position for the US and a development which, at least to us, confirms China's ascendancy to global economic superpower status."

It would be entirely rational for a G2 to prevent a third great power from rising, and India is the only candidate: Brazil, Russia, South Africa, and the EU are handicapped in one way or the other, e.g., geography, resources, demographics, and politics. Therefore, the G2 are imposing a Thucydides Trap on India: wage economic war, and balkanise it.

Rajeev Srinivasan
is an alumnus of IIT Madras and Stanford. He has taught innovation at IIMs and had stints in Bell Labs and Silicon Valley. He focuses on technology, strategy and foreign affairs
RajeevSrinivasa

Everybody has learned lessons from the recent past ("Confessions of an economic hit-man", anyone?): how Japan was ruined via the Plaza Accord, how Britain lost its pre-eminence by debasing its currency, and how the US allowed itself to be systematically de-industrialised by China over the last 30 years.

Adani is a proxy for India. Mark Mobius, a legendary investor, said investing in Adani is investing in India. The group has demonstrated the capability to deliver in more than one domain, especially in ports and airports (Disclaimer: I have a small position in Adani Ports). They have operations in Colombo, Haifa (Israel), and Abbot Point (Australia), which makes them a potentially major player in global shipping, not to mention their container ports at Mundra and Vizhinjam (Thiruvananthapuram).

There have been several waves of allegations against the Adani group, the first came in June 2021 over improprieties in investments by Mauritius-based funds; the second in January 2023 with the Hindenburg (a short-seller) report alleging stock manipulation and accounting fraud; the third in November 2024, a US Department of Justice allegation about bribery; the fourth in October 2025 by *The Washington Post* alleging the Indian government induced LIC to invest $3.9 billion in Adani firms.

When the Hindenburg report was publicised as the "largest con in corporate history" by media such as Reuters, *FT*, and *WSJ*, I wrote that "The Adani Group may not be derailed by Hindenburg". In fact, it was Hindenburg that closed shop.

Adani has been successful in their ports and energy businesses; they are doing well in airports; their efforts in green energy and in data centres (the new Google AI data centre in Visakhapatnam) may yet prove to be winners. Thus, Adani has shown it can compete well in difficult infrastructure sectors. Of course, these need to align with government policies. Which brings whispers of "crony capitalism", which is rich coming from the US, where "robber barons" like John D Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, J P Morgan, and Cornelius Vanderbilt created enormous fortunes primarily through cronyism. Have you heard "What's good for General Motors is good for America"? Boeing, the Koch Brothers, Goldman Sachs, and Big Tech are current beneficiaries of State munificence.

India has had its share of crony capitalists who provided citizens with shoddy goods at high prices. I don't dare name them, but you know who they are. Every country supports its national champions: Japan's *zaibatsus*, Korea's *chaebols*, not to mention China's State-owned companies. It is neither sinful nor unusual for the State to support dominant, effective players.

OUTSIDE

When the news breaks, what does it break?

Sumana Roy
is an author and poet. Her books include *How I Became a Tree* and *Provincials*

We are surer about the news than we are about the story – news must come from outside, the story might have found its way into the world from the inside. The provenance of the story or the poem or song has always been a bit ambiguous – the reason one often asks a writer where it 'came from'. We've never had to wonder about the birth certificate of 'news'. This binary, between the worldly origin of news and the slightly mystical – if not mystified – birth of something that's 'made up', we were aware of intuitively, until news began to 'break'. On Doordarshan, the only television channel in India until the early 1990s, there was never any 'breaking news'. Socialist India did not have permission to break anything – the sound of a glass breaking in the kitchen would hang like a damp rag for days in most houses; the news was read with politeness and care, its tone and pitch not very different from a priest's enunciation of the mantras. The television set was a quieter planet – nothing could break inside it, not even news.

The 'breaking' of 'breaking news' comes from the history of the physical layout of newspapers – the insertion of an urgent story that's just come in, that forces a 'breaking' of the planned layout of the page. It would find its equivalent in radio and, soon enough, in television, where regular programming would be interrupted by the sharing of an urgent bulletin, a 'breaking into'. The phrasal verb reveals a kind of gasping energy, like a gust that might break through a window. Right from the beginning, the word has been associated with varying degrees of violence. Looking at this etymological life, of words gradually coming to sit beside 'break', one grows aware of a history of fear of the outside, an attack from it on what we call 'inside'.

The elements, trees, animals, people, buildings, objects inside them – individually or in various combinations can cause breakage. We can also break them all, all besides the elements, of course. This breaking is not soundless. In these sounds is a history of resistance offered by us and them; a history of the outside, its speed and intensity, a calibration of its violence. I suppose it is an impress and anticipation of all of these that are summed up in a phrase such as 'breaking news'.

Stories and poems break too. Their origin is suspect, as is their intention. We presume that they come from 'somewhere deep inside', a phrase that is as apocryphal as it is mystifying. Outside the causality that marks the news cycle, a relay race of alertness, attention, and action, the information in a poem confuses. We can't recognise it often, and, when we can, we don't know what to do with it. Take the poem 'Breaking [News]', written by Noor Hindi, a Palestinian-American poet. It begins with news about news: '*We'll wake up, Sunday morning, and read the paper. Read each other./Become consumers/of each other's stories...*'

Consumption is a unidirectional journey, from the outside to the inside, the route of news and food. These lines are followed immediately by '*a desperate reaching/for another body's warmth – its words buoying us through a world*'. The difference in directions, between news to the consumer and the reaching for the warmth of a human body, emphasises something else – that news might not only be in 'words' and accompanying images but also in the wordless. Why is it that we do not recognise this, the 'desperate reaching' and 'another body's warmth', as news?

The other words that follow become news – how can 'graveyards on our backs', coming from a Palestinian poet, not? We slide into the making of news: '*In interviews, I frame my subject's stories through a lens to make them digestible/to consumers*'. I pause to notice the word 'frame'. Just a few lines before this was 'reaching out', a breaking out of the frame. Could it be true that what is called 'breaking news' must also be tamed within a frame, that it's actually an illusion, the belief that only what breaks the geometry of the expected is categorised as 'news'?

I pause at another word: 'digestible'. The digestive system, a secret of our inside, when tamed by metaphor, becomes a controllable thing, 'digestible', in a way we can't be certain about the food that enters our gullet. '*Ibecome a machine. A transfer of information./...What's lost is incalculable*'. I suppose it's the 'incalculable' that cannot become 'news', the reason our internal bulletins cannot be broadcast? The poem ends with swimming pools that 'will be gutted of water'; 'it'll be impossible to swim'. That's the thing about insides – whether gut or 'gutted', they don't break into news.

DECCAN HERALD
Sunday
November 2, 2025

Calm control: How to tame the surge

Converting restless throngs into smooth flows is possible with a blend of psychology, design, cultural awareness and a dash of empathy, discovers Barkha Kumari

Whether it is taking a holy dip or entering a concert ground, never hold crowds back from what they have set out to do. For Prof Ashish Verma of the Indian Institute of Science (IISC), Bengaluru, this is the first golden rule of crowd management. Leaving people stuck and uncertain builds up both psychological and physical pressure, which can trigger a crowd crush.

Instead of allowing choke points to form, he suggests creating buffer or holding zones where people can be gathered in smaller, manageable batches. Add a layer of positive engagement there: play bhajans at spiritual events, or make announcements like 'Your turn in 10 minutes' or 'Buses will run until 11 pm'. This technique, called priming, turns simmering restlessness into a psychological cushion.

Outside, the focus should be on localising and containing friction. One way is to create single-file, one-way routes using barricades or temporary railings. In contrast, leaving people in a wide, directionless space can spur confusion and then a ripple of panic.

Kumbh Mela study

Verma has authored more than 50 research papers on pedestrian and crowd dynamics.

In 2016, he led a study of the Kumbh Mela, one of the world's largest spiritual gatherings. The aim was to develop crowd management guidelines and a model to predict the likelihood of stampedes. For over a month in Ujjain, his team worked on-site in 40°C heat to track the flow of pilgrims and understand their motivations. They gathered data using GoPro cameras, CCTV footage, wearable sensors, drones, and on-ground surveys. The fieldwork, he explains, is crucial; not optional. Models to predict crowd risk, built on lab simulations, tend to flatten the chaos and complexity of real human behaviour. A fire drill in a closed room might show how people exit, but not why they gather, how fast they surge, or what instincts take over when danger strikes. "We have argued this in our papers," he says.

Yet, lab studies dominate the field because on-ground research gets tangled in layers of security and red tape.

Cultural context vital

Verma notes that crowd management in India is currently handled by the police. And they rely on a kinetic force approach, treating it as a matter of numbers rather than a behavioural system. In Germany, for example, people are sensitive about their personal space even in dense crowds. In India, close physical contact, like someone brushing against your shoulder, is far more acceptable. Spacing strategies, thus, need to be tailored to the cultural context.

Then there's motivation. From the Ujjain experiment, his team observed that pilgrims walked longer distances and moved faster even as the crowd thickened around them. The drive for "spiritual gains" fuels their stride.

Another striking pattern was serpentine behaviour. Groups travelling together often displayed competitive tendencies to overtake the crowd. They moved forward in snake-like chains, linking hands or resting them on each other's shoulders, because moving in circles or parabolas was impossible amid the pressing sea of people. Verma notes that as these chains slice through the crowd, even minor brushes and bumps can set off waves of pushing.

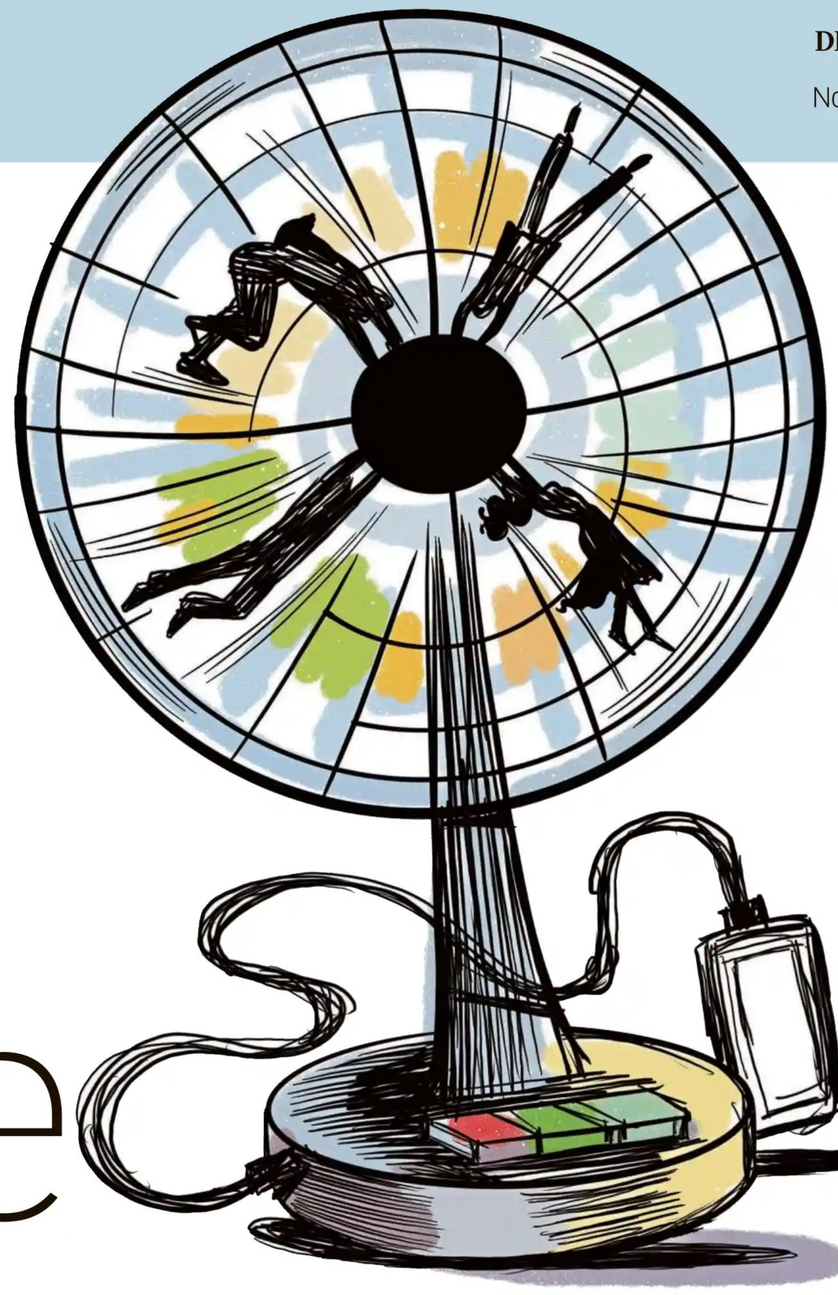
Bring on the SOP

Verma argues that crowd management needs evidence-based Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Crowd dynamics are complex systems, but not inherently unpredictable. Yet, India has neither recognised it as a scientific discipline nor established academic training to groom experts. And the needle hasn't yet moved on the recommendations his team sent to top authorities following the Kumbh Mela study.

But he says India needs SOPs more than ever. From pilgrimages to concerts and political rallies, we have entered an era of overpublicity and are flaunting the huge numbers they draw. Ancient holy cities such as Varanasi, with their narrow alleys, were never built to handle today's influx of tourists. Designing crowd safety protocols here means navigating the constraints of its historic built environment. Proactive planning holds the key to crowd safety, he emphasises.

From Amitabh mania to anime wars, fandoms have morphed from garden-variety clubs to full-blown digital cults where love, loyalty, and a little lunacy collide in this scroll-happy age, writes Savitha Karthik

We, the fan people



DH ILLUSTRATIONS: SAJITH KUMAR

A little over four decades ago, Hindi cinema's superstar Amitabh Bachchan was seriously injured while on shoot for Manmohan Desai's directorial *Coolie* (1983). An entire nation prayed for his recovery, and once the film was released, cinema lovers thronged the theatres — the fight sequence in which Amitabh was injured was frozen — and that led to even greater frenzy among fans to watch the film. The original script, which had the hero dying, was changed to show him surviving. Needless to add, the film was a roaring box-office hit of the time.

Intense adulation is hardly a new phenomenon, be it cinema, cricket or politics, and is true not just for India, but across the world. When Arthur Conan Doyle 'killed' the world's most beloved detective, Sherlock Holmes, the magazine, *Strand*, that published the story, 'The Final Problem', is said to have seen many subscription cancellations. Following pressure to bring back Holmes, Doyle revived the detective in a subsequent story.

A sense of belonging

In the pre-Internet era, fans organised themselves into clubs, held events and even wrote fan fiction versions of their favourite characters in fanzines that were circulated. In the early Internet era, fans created mailing lists and websites on hosting services like Geocities. Later, they formed communities on spaces like LiveJournal, Tumblr, Discord, and, more recently, Archive of Our Own (AO3). Social media platforms like X and Reddit have also birthed many a fandom.

At its core, every fandom is meant to give its members a sense of community and belonging, driven by a shared love for a character, book, film or personality. And so, there are fandoms for cricketers, anime, film stars, Korean dramas, Korean pop aka K-pop (including the hugely popular BTS, the South Korean boy band) and so on.

Are anime fandoms toxic?

When this writer asked Reddit users on an Indian anime community what the fandom meant to them, one user felt that "people are a lot ruder and more opinionated online" because of the anonymity that comes with it. The user said that they have formed some great friendships offline, thanks to a shared love for anime. Another Reddit user observed that "older fandoms" were welcoming while the recent anime fans were "toxic" and "immature". Go down online anime fandom rabbit holes, and you will find intense rivalry among different anime fans.

Some of the most vocal fans can be found around communities dedicated to Japanese anime and manga like One Piece, Dragon Ball Z, Naruto, Demon Slayer and Jujutsu Kaizen. According to reports, the September release of 'Demon Slayer: Infinity Castle' in Indian theatres was met with such craze that there were 5 am shows. The film has become the highest-grossing anime film in India.

Shift in fandom culture

Not everyone is an active part of a fandom; some follow fandom hashtags for similar perspectives. Pratishtha Gupta, 30, a working professional in Mumbai, explains, "I am not an active part of any fandom but follow hashtags for particular shows religiously when I am watching them on-air, trying to explore perspectives similar or distinct to mine."

Pratishtha Gupta

She remembers watching a Pakistani drama called *Zindagi Gulzar Hai*, which had left a huge imprint on her back in 2015. Did her admiration for a celebrity take her to an event or concert? She says, although she didn't attend any such event, her love for the drama sent her into a spiral where she started watching all things Pakistani, "for our shared love of culture and their style of storytelling."

However, she says that as much as she loved Sanam Saeed or Fawad Khan (the lead actors), there was no attempt at forming any one-sided, parasocial relationship with the stars. "In fact, I made a splendid co-incidental connection with a hotshot director of the show — to whom I conveyed my heartiest regards — but there was always an implicit maturity to know that the characters I adore are just...characters," Pratishtha recalls. The 30-year-old, who has been watching web-based content since 2014, observes that there has been a definite shift in fandom culture, from a sense of belonging, wanting to be seen and heard, to a more negative and extreme form of engagement.

"Some people in fandoms are incredibly sharp and observant, picking up nuances from scenes and episodes that one might miss on their own; a truly beautiful way to learn," she says, adding that blind adulation has risen among these fandoms today, which cuts chances of meaningful conversations.

Rivalries, on and off the pitch

All talk of online fandoms and no mention of cricket? Just a cursory scroll through any social media platform will throw up hundreds of posts of one cricketer's fandom sparring with another's, and sometimes coming together to troll a third cricketer and his fans.

Soumitra Kulkarni, 28, a working professional from Pune, is a huge fan of Indian cricketer Rohit Sharma and runs an online fan club called @rohitions45 on social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Threads and YouTube. Having participated in many public events and watched some leading cricketers live, his dream of meeting his favourite Rohit Sharma one-on-one is still pending, he says.

On Instagram, his fan club has crossed over one lakh followers — on the question of toxicity among online fan clubs, he says, "as 'Rohitions45' we support all cricketing legends with major focus on #RohiRat (Rohit Sharma-Virat Kohli) pair." Do fans feel the pressure of defending their favourites through the not-so-great phases? "We enjoy and share the good and the bad phases with each other," he says.

Every Indian Premier League season brings extreme fandom wars to the forefront — news reports show how fandoms of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have clashed in the past, leading to ugliness both online and offline *(see second story)*.

Fans taking their club slogans a little too seriously, turning 'creators' with a lot of brand-related memes and other content, have often whipped up hysteria. "Fans who abuse fans of other cricketers or players themselves are hardly lovers of cricket or Team India," says Pintu Behera, 37. "Many of them are still teenagers and aren't here for the love of the game," says Pintu. The Odisha man calls himself a Virat Kohli superfan, and the 20 tattoos he has, of Virat and his records, are a testament to his craze. Pintu took to following the journey of ace batter Virat Kohli from 2012. He has even met the cricketer and shown him his tattoos. The Virat 'super fan' has a huge fan following with his Instagram handle (@virat18superfan) fetching him followers of nearly 300k, last checked.

Superfans as 'creators'

The superfan culture seems to be taking over the celebrity-fandom ecosystem, with brands also tapping into the trend. According to a 2024 YouTube report on fandoms, 87 per cent of Gen Z describe themselves as a fan of someone or something, while 26 per cent of the fandoms call themselves 'super fans'. "Casual fans may just consume media, but super fans routinely create media about the object of their fandom," the report observes. Further, the report notes that "creators are often objects of fandom and fans at the same time."

Pintu Behera with Kohli.

But what happens when obsessive fan behaviour goes too far? Can constant hype in online fandoms around stars and extreme adulation lead to unhealthy behaviour? Bengaluru-based counselling psychologist Sindhura Aiyappa explains, "constant online engagement and presence may bring a small sense of belonging, but that is largely virtual. There is no actual investment in real people."

Sindhura Aiyappa

In that sense, engaging online acts like a 'filler' in youngsters' lives, and they probably get a kick out of that, she notes. Sindhura warns that constant content consumption can give too much information and lead to overwhelm, emotionally as well. "You are absorbing somebody else's emotions all the time, be it via movies or shows, and then, when these emotions begin to pile up, it can lead to fatigue, lethargy and brain fog," she explains. High emotions need a vent somewhere, which explains irrational or impulsive behaviours, she adds.

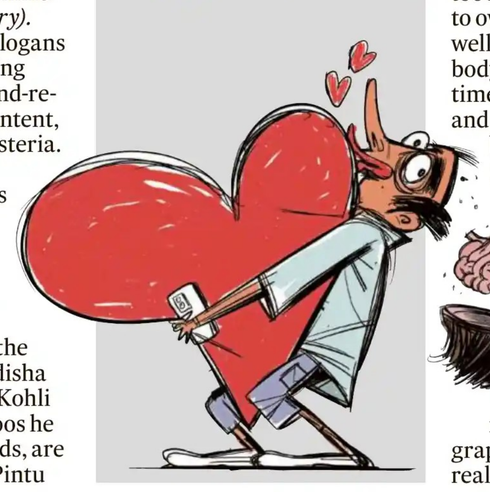
A re-acquaintance with one's immediate environments may be the much-needed balm for those grappling with a world where the real and virtual meld.

Help your kid snap out of it!

Here are some simple strategies for parents/adults to help youngsters overcome repetitive obsessive behavioural patterns:

1. Ask specific questions to understand the youngster's interests and reasons for staying online all the time.
2. Get the child to take up some form of physical activity that helps dopamine release.
3. Get them to take an interest in some short creative exercise: these could be small bursts to break monotony or routine. It could be as simple as folding a tissue in a different pattern.
4. Encourage your young adult to socialise in small ways.

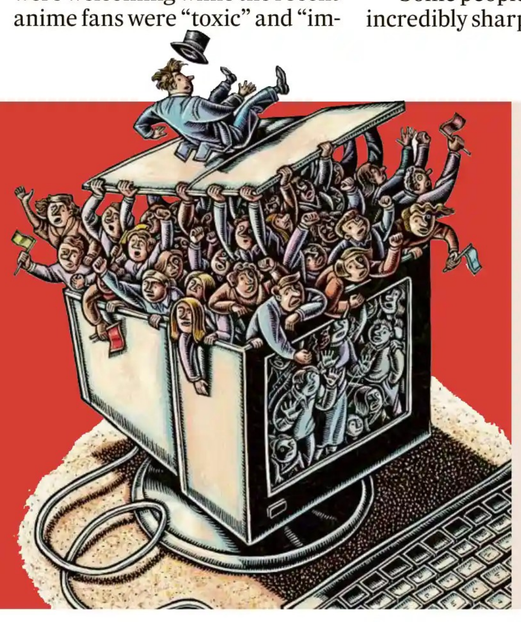
(Inputs from counselling psychologist Sindhura Aiyappa)



Call it crowd crush

According to Verma, there's a growing push in the research community to replace the word stampede with crowd crush. Stampede refers to a herd of animals suddenly running in one direction out of fear or excitement, "an action that begins from within". In contrast, crowd crushes result from "turbulence on the ground".

Crowd behaviour expert Prof Edwin Galea weighed in on the use of stampede in a 'Guardian' report on the 2022 Seoul Halloween tragedy, where a crowd surge killed more than 150 people. "... it apportions blame to the victims for behaving in an irrational, self-destructive, unthinking and uncaring manner," he said. In reality, he noted, the failures lie with the authorities, in their poor planning, lack of control, and weak policing.



THE PULMONOLOGIST'S PERSPECTIVE

1. What's at risk?

Dr Ravindra Mehta points out that the lungs and the heart are unforgiving organs. In a crush, if someone falls and is trampled, "the lungs can give way within minutes." This isn't a normal emergency where help can reach quickly, he reminds. Dr Sachin Kumar adds that damage to vital organs sharply reduces the chance of survival. "The only silver lining is when someone is suffocating but otherwise uninjured. In those cases, prompt CPR or oxygen can be lifesaving," he says.

2. What about survival hacks?

Dr Kumar says, during a crush, raise your head or turn sideways to find air pockets and keep breathing. Look for an exit that leads outward, steering clear of moving deeper into the crowd's epicentre. Stay on your feet if possible. If you fall, curl into a foetal position with arms over your chest and head tucked in to protect vital organs. Bystanders can help by clearing airways or administering CPR. Organisers, he adds, should run survival drills or screen such drills on-site.

3. Read the mood. Always!

In reality, Dr Mehta says, panic impedes the ability to act rationally in chaotic moments. However, if people remain collectively calm, lives can be saved. His counsel is simple: read the crowd's mood, and leave the moment something feels off.

The Internet has some general crowd safety tips from event organisers. Wear bright clothes to stay visible, avoid flowy outfits or loose jewellery that can snag, tie your laces tight, carry water, avoid standing near barricades, and stand on firm ground. And if the crowd moves, go with the flow and match its pace.

This compelling work contrasts China's engineering-driven ambitions with America's lawyer-led inertia, showing how both nations mirror each other, writes Gunjan Singh

China builds, US argues

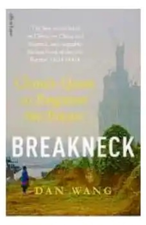
The author explores why the Chinese state is obsessed with mega construction projects. Seen here is the China Zun skyscraper in Beijing while it was still being built.

Dan Wang's Breakneck: China's Quest to Engineer the Future is a timely and much-needed work to understand what drives the construction obsession of the Chinese state. Breakneck is the apt word to describe the speed at which China is building and constructing. The author is a Canadian technology analyst and writer who specialises in contemporary China. A research fellow at the Hoover Institution, he is also a visiting scholar at the Yale Law School's Paul Tsai China Center.

Reading the book while Beijing unveiled its tallest bridge in Guizhou Province —cutting travel time from two hours to two minutes — proved prophetic. Wang discusses why the Chinese state is obsessed with mega projects, and this news puts his argument into perspective. He writes, "Call it propaganda of the deed, but one way to impress a billion-plus people is to pour a lot of concrete." Beijing is not only constructing at home but also exporting its formula to the world through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The book is woven with personal experiences and anecdotes and provides a nuanced understanding of the path Beijing has adopted for growth and development. Wang's core idea is to compare, contrast and predict which country, China or the United States, is better positioned for the future. His central argument is that the United States and China "are inversions of each other" and that both can learn from one another. Wang calls the Chinese state an engineering state, while the United States is one driven by lawyers. He argues that as Washington lost its "enthusiasm for engineers," China embraced engineering in all its dimensions. Its leaders are not only civil or electrical engineers — they are, fundamentally, social engineers.

The planning and execution of the One-Child Policy and the Zero-Covid Policy, he writes, could only be achieved in an engineering state, especially one driven by data. It is a state that does not consider its citizens to have emotions and is obsessed with controlling and commanding their bodies, minds and souls. This argument strengthens when he notes, "The Communist Party continues to build because it's full of engineers and also because Marxist-Leninists don't want to cede economic agency to the people."



BREAKNECK
Dan Wang
Penguin,
pp 264,
Rs 1,499

Protecting the wealthy

He calls the United States a country today driven — or rather stalled — by lawyers, a total contrast to Beijing. Chinese leaders for generations have been engineers, while most American leaders and policymakers have prominently been lawyers. "The United States is still a superpower that is able to outclass China on many dimensions," Wang argues, "but it is also in the grips of an ineffectual state where people are increasingly concerned with safeguarding a comfortable way of life."

Lawyers, he observes, are primarily focused on protecting the wealthy, and their dominance has pushed the cost and timeline of major infrastructure projects in the United States, becoming a major criticism and hurdle for American society today. The United States needs to build, as most of its infrastructure is dated, dilapidated, and in need of upgrade.

Written around the achievements and challenges faced by both Beijing and Washington in the last four decades, Wang makes a heartfelt comparison of the two countries, governments and societies. He asserts, "The future would be better if China could learn to build less, while the United States learns to build more." He also notes that for more than four decades, China and the United States "have been complementary to each other." The "commitment to transformation is an ideology that both the United States and China share." Yet, when it comes to transformation, while the United States celebrates innovation, China is a technological power today primarily because of "its spectacular capacity for learning by doing and consistently improving things."

Beyond data and timelines

What stands out is an interesting point Wang makes about the adjective "developing." He argues that the United States should also consider itself a developing country, just as China does, because: "Isn't it better than to be a 'developed' one, which implies that you're done, finished, at the end of the road?"

The author beautifully juxtaposes the differences and similarities between the two major global economies. He rightly asserts that the "United States has pluralistic values, which positions it to better figure out the right solutions." His argument that China must recognise that mega projects and "literal-minded solutions" cannot alone define its future path is persuasive. China needs to extend agency to its people and believes that "their creative energy could bring as much prestige to China as great public works."

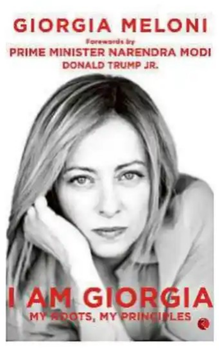
The book is a beautiful comparison of China and the United States that moves beyond data and timelines, providing a glimpse into how the two nations are inherently tuned to behave and act. It is this inherent difference, Wang shows, that makes their relationship interesting and their future interdependent. Breakneck does not merely compare two powers; it dissects their temperaments. Where America litigates, China constructs. Where the United States safeguards rights, China engineers results. Both, Wang concludes, are incomplete without the other.

A woman of belief in an age of doubt

This readable memoir is less of a marketing exercise and more a narrative of surprising candour and coherence, writes Srinath Sridharan

In the crowded theatre of contemporary politics, where image often outpaces substance, Giorgia Meloni walks on stage as a storyteller. I Am Giorgia: My Roots, My Principles is both a manifesto and a memoir — a political declaration wrapped in personal history, a story that seeks to humanise conviction and justify ambition. The English translation by Sylvia Adrian Notini deserves special praise. It is lucid and nimble, capturing the rhythms of Meloni's speech and the cadence of her convictions. The prose feels authentically hers — brisk, defiant and charged with emotion — without ever losing fluency.

When I first opened the book, I expected yet another political memoir — and with a foreword by India's Prime Minister, one could easily have dismissed it as a clever marketing exercise for Indian readers. Yet, a few chapters in, those suspicions recede. What emerges is a narrative of surprising candour and coherence, written with a clarity of thought and an almost diaristic sense of self. It is a life shaped, as Meloni insists, by upheaval, timing and luck — all fused with a stubborn belief in destiny.



I AM GIORGIA
Giorgia Meloni
Rupa, pp 288, Rs 695

The story begins in Garbatella, a working-class Roman neighbourhood that functions as both backdrop and metaphor. Meloni's recollections of her mother's long shifts, her father's absence, and her own adolescence — marked by insecurity and ambition — lend the memoir emotional density. Out of this early turbulence, she crafts the moral grammar that defines her politics: faith, identity, family, and belonging.

Over the past two years, Indian readers could scarcely have missed Meloni's omnipresence on global and social media. Ask anyone, including teenagers who do not follow world news, and you will likely get an impromptu impression of her expressive gestures and dramatic eye-rolls. What might have seemed theatrical turns, on closer inspection, into something more interesting — a leader who commands presence through spontaneity. She leads, quite literally, with a rare, unfiltered style in a world of political choreography. As the narrative unfolds, Meloni traces her path from the youth wing of a post-Fascist movement to leading the Brothers of Italy and becoming the nation's first woman prime minister. She frames her rise as a story of perseverance in a political world that often viewed her as an interloper. Her self-portrait is that of the outsider: rooted, instinctive, unafraid of unfashionable opinions.

And yet, as some critics have observed, this self-styled image of the girl from the "gritty streets" of Rome deserves a second look. And that the myth of the tough street survivor is overstated. Garbatella, while working-class, has long been a vibrant, even bohemian neighbourhood. The portrait of hardship gives the narrative emotional weight, but also a touch of political theatre — a rewriting of origins into modern storytelling. As a memoir, however, I Am Giorgia remains remarkably readable.

The book's ideological sections, by contrast, reveal its limitations. Her critique of globalisation and liberalism is drawn in sweeping terms; her defence of tradition is offered as a self-evident truth rather than an argument. The moral clarity she claims often replaces nuance with assertion. And yet, it is precisely this certainty — unshaken, unapologetic — that explains her resonance with millions.

Giorgia Meloni takes a selfie with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Italy. (PTI FILE PHOTO)

In political terms, Meloni's success in uniting traditional conservatives with her own more radical lineage has become something of a model abroad. She has achieved a synthesis of populist energy and establishment stability that few leaders have managed. Whether one agrees with her or not, her rise marks a turning point in the language of European conservatism — less about policy, more about presence.

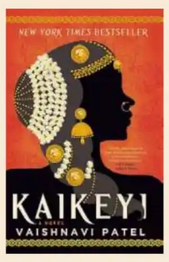
In the end, this book is best read as a portrait of belief — of how adversity, ambition and narrative can forge ideology. It is a window into the mood of a continent rethinking its identity — weary of global abstractions, yearning for rootedness, and searching for authenticity. Meloni's life story may be partisan, even curated, but it embodies the emotional power of conviction in an age of doubt.

MOOD BOARD

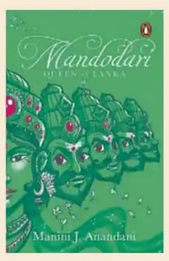
There have been quite a few feminist retellings of Indian mythology in recent times. Here is a selection:

Bhima's Wife by Kavita Kane (Penguin/2025)
Hidimbi is the focus of this story spun by Kane, who recasts a familiar tale in her voice. A narrative rich with emotional nuance, Kane explores the mindscape of the mighty Bhima's overlooked wife, the forgotten daughter-in-law, the self-sacrificial mother. The novel grants this silent warrior a voice and agency, both while retaining the essence of the epic. It is an important addition to the growing genre of feminist myth-fiction.

Kaikeyi by Vaishnavi Patel (Hachette/2023)
She is the mythical 'vamp' of Ramayana. In this engaging novel, though, she is a woman with a mind of her own, a queen wrestling with questions of identity, power and duty. This is an ambitious and atmospheric novel that does not hesitate to turn stories that we have heard on their head. Despite its uneven pacing, this is a re-imagining that is necessary to counter the many cardboard versions of Kaikeyi that all of us have endured.



Mandodari: Queen of Lanka (Penguin/2018)
Here is a novel that gives Mandodari, Ravana's queen, the limelight she probably deserved all along. It explores her life as the queen consort, her moral uprightness amidst war and her wavering loyalties. Despite its rather clunky narrative style, it is a book that dares to wonder if Ravana was indeed the villain he was made out to be, even while the focus remains on Mandodari's efforts to be good and righteous.



Mood Board *is a column that presents thematic lists of books on hot-button topics.*

Breaking chains but bearing new scars

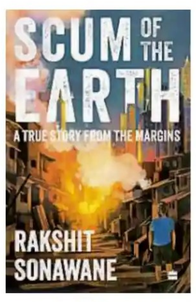
Scum of the Earth powerfully exposes caste realities, yet its journalistic tone and uneven structure limit its literary impact, says M K Chandra Bose

The novel, heavily inspired by the author's own life, tells the story of a Dalit boy from a Mumbai slum. (PIC FOR REPRESENTATION)

Breaking free from the shackles of tradition is not an easy option for a sensitive individual from a marginalised caste. Education, idealism, hard work and honesty are not enough to gain acceptance by society at large. Despite claims to the contrary, caste prejudices still linger even in cosmopolitan Mumbai.

The protection that the Constitution offers to the underprivileged does not go very far in the era of liberalisation. These are the issues that crop up in Scum of the Earth, a true story from the margins, a debut novel by veteran Mumbai journalist Rakshit Sonawane.

Written in 'bits and pieces' over several years, the work encapsulates the journey of Avinash, a Dalit boy born in a Mumbai slum, and his parents, Dagadoo and Godavari. Dagadoo, a convert to Buddhism and follower of Ambedkar, migrated from his village to Mumbai to ensure a life with dignity for his son. The teachings of Buddha and Ambedkar's life guided the family. It is a saga of survival against odds, a dogged fight against poverty, humiliation and greed. However, there is a price to pay for living with dignity.



SCUM OF THE EARTH
Rakshit Sonawane
Harper, pp 322,
Rs 499

The incidents narrated in the semi-autobiographical work are heavily drawn from the author's own experience. After landing a job in the docks, narrator Avinash finds the place a den of corruption. He is advised to learn the tricks to make some extra money, work like others and enjoy life. Refusal to fall in line makes him a marked man and a thorn in the flesh of greedy staff members and security men colluding with unscrupulous businessmen. He is steadfast in his criticism of the corrupt, irrespective of the consequences.

Avinash's first visit to his ancestral village leaves an indelible mark on his psyche. The sight of Dalit families being relegated to the outskirts despite the progress made is hard for him to stomach. Cosmopolitan Mumbai always fascinated Avinash, but a closer look reveals it as a make-believe, deceptive world with its own rules and regulations. He comes to realise how ugly and unscrupulous it is. While Scum of the Earth tells the story of one man's journey from the margins to the mainstream, it is also the tale of Mumbai's underclass.

Avinash is no rebel. But he refuses to follow the traditions of his ancestors who languished in poverty, illiteracy and servility. He believes he has a different life protected by the Constitution. He wants to overcome his limitations with hard work and honesty instead of whining about what others have. That greed cuts across caste lines is a revelation for him. He is astonished by how the oppressed act like the oppressor when they are empowered. He wants them to outshine their oppressors by efficiency and sincerity and set an example to cleanse the system. Also, the spectacle of members of backward castes becoming drum-beaters of majoritarianism baffles him.

Right from his school days, Avinash has been exposed to the reality of the caste divide, with taunts from classmates being a constant. Later, he is shocked to learn that even glitzy newsrooms are not free from the bias shown by the elite castes. While working in the docks, he nurses an ambition of becoming a journalist as a watchdog of democracy. Although well qualified, he is turned away by editors. One is candid to tell him: "This is a specialised job that requires a lot of intelligence, knowledge and an analytical mind. This profession is not for you people."

As a reporter, he is advised to develop contacts and make extra money. Certain beats are out of bounds for him. Scoffing at his suggestion to do a story on the redevelopment of defunct textile mills' land, his editor suggests stories on celebrities' lifestyles to garner more advertising revenue. Avinash also learns that not all journalists are upright. Later, when he gets an opportunity to lead a team of reporters, all four of his team members put in their papers. But he is undeterred.

Scum of the Earth holds a mirror to contemporary India's fault lines, where the caste bias of traditional privileged castes is very much alive, in subtler forms. He reminds Ambedkarites not to forget the struggles of the past and not to take reservations for granted.

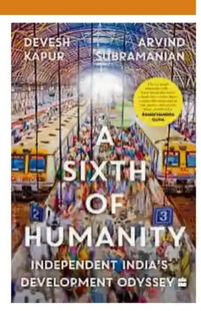
As a novel, Scum of the Earth has its limitations. It is akin to reportage focusing on socio-political issues rather than a story with a well-knit plot and compelling characters. Critique of social evils and yearning for an egalitarian society alone cannot create a good novel.

READ OF THE WEEK

India's journey has been distinctively 'precocious' in comparative terms. It opted for democracy before development and social change, promoted high-skilled services before and over low-skilled manufacturing and chose a globalisation that favoured exports of talented people and short-changed the poor. The outcomes have been surprising, with the country achieving success in creating and sustaining democracy, albeit flawed, and maintaining a modicum of order. Four decades of economic dynamism and the emergence of a somewhat more capable Indian state have meant that it can build infrastructure and deliver the essentials of life to its population at a scale that is still not without disappointments, but a massive improvement over the past. As the world gets radically upended, India's development odyssey is at a critical juncture.

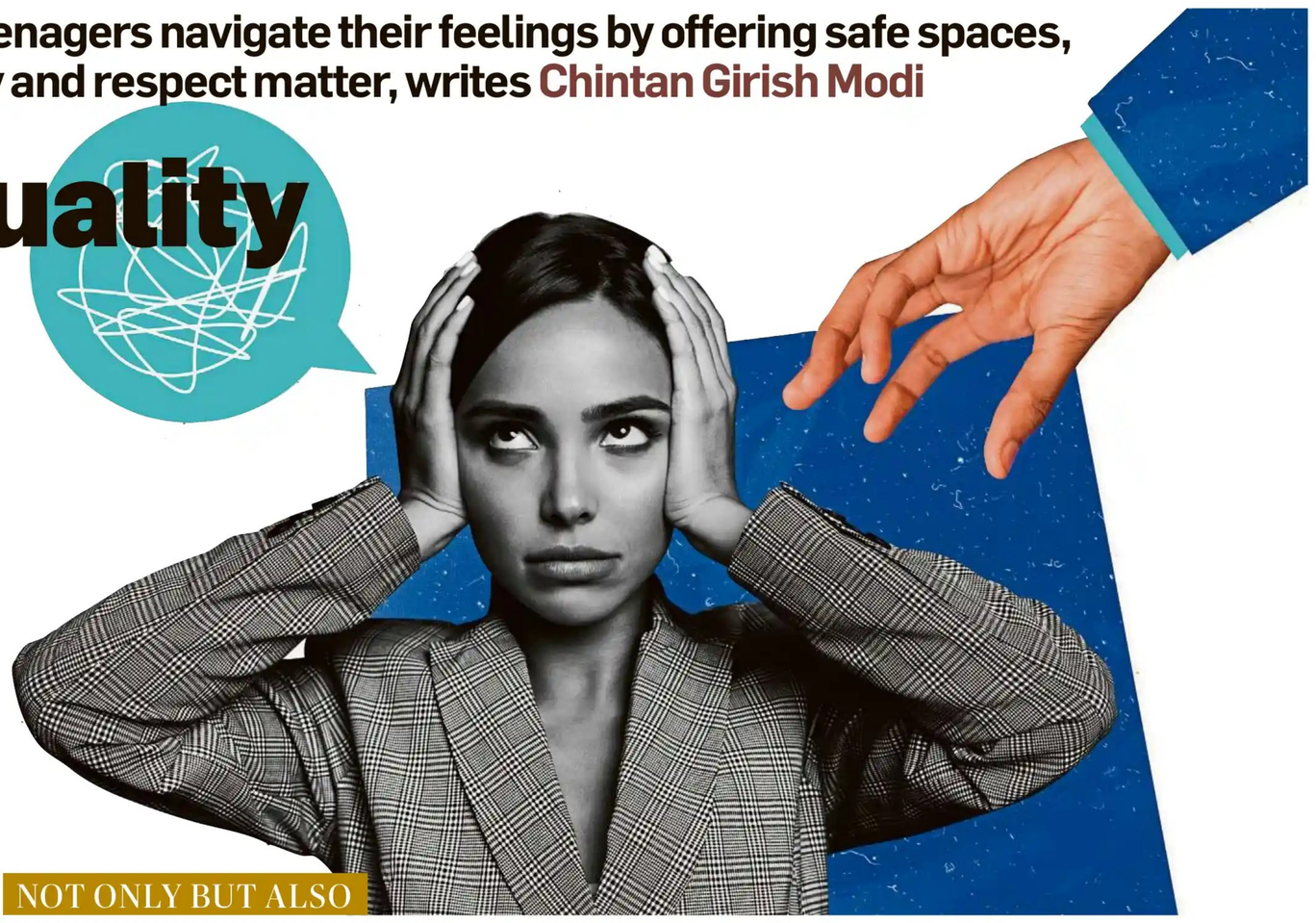
A Sixth of Humanity is an attempt to trace how one of the largest and most diverse countries in the world, uniquely and daringly, attempted four concurrent transformations-building a state, creating an economy, changing society and forging a sense of nationhood-under conditions of universal suffrage.

Jointly written by political scientist Devesh Kapur and economist Arvind Subramanian, both of whom have decades of academic and policy experience, this rigorously researched book encompasses perspectives that span disciplines, experiences and geographies.



Parents and teachers can help teenagers navigate their feelings by offering safe spaces, where healthy curiosity, empathy and respect matter, writes Chintan Girish Modi

Talking sexuality WITH TEENS



NOT ONLY BUT ALSO

Anurag Basu's film *Metro...In Dino* (2025) has this scene where Pihu, a teenage girl (played by Ahana Basu), calls up her aunt Chumki (played by Sara Ali Khan), and says that she is not sure if she is attracted to boys or girls because she is drawn to two of her friends at school. One is a boy, and the other is a girl. It seems that Pihu is unfamiliar with the concept of bisexuality.

At first, Chumki tells Pihu that she is too young—only 15—to be so worried about her orientation, and that she will eventually figure out whether she is attracted to boys, girls or both. It comes across as an open-minded and affirming response from a trusted adult, reinforcing the teenager's autonomy. When Pihu insists on a more immediate game plan, Chumki recommends a kissing test. The results are disastrous. Pihu kisses the boy and runs away. He tries to make sense of what has happened, and whether he is responsible for it, but she starts hiding from him. Later, Pihu tries to kiss the girl when she is asleep at a camp sleepover. The girl is repelled by this non-consensual interaction. She starts avoiding Pihu, and excluding her on the sports field.

Support matters

While watching the film, it occurred to me that Pihu is not alone in her predicament, and I began to reflect on how parents and teachers could support teenagers going through such experiences.

Sujata Kelkar Shetty, a clinical scientist trained at the National Institutes of Health in Maryland, USA, and author of the book *Resilience Decoded: What Every Parent Should Know About Teen Mental Health*, says, "Communicating with teens means building their trust and this often starts with the small stuff. Be curious about their life. Get to know their friends and what they like to do. Ask them how their day went and if they learned anything interesting in school."

As the mother of two teenage sons, she believes that staying connected to their world makes it easier for teenagers to approach parents with bigger, more complex issues, like sexuality. "The more you communicate with your teen, the more comfortable they will feel because teens often have a hard time talking about themselves," she adds. Sujata recommends broaching sensitive topics in a way that will not make teenagers uneasy or scare them off. There is no need to prepare a lecture. The experience of watching a movie or web series with a bisexual character can easily turn into a "teachable moment". According to Sujata, one can simply say, "The character in this show is attracted to boys and girls. That's okay with me. What do you think?"

This appears to be a mature approach, where the parent is simply communicating their acceptance of and respect for varied sexual orientations. At the same time, there is ample room for the teenager to put forth their personal thoughts. However, one also wonders if teenagers would appreciate having their fun movie night transformed into a educational exercise.

Sadaf, a therapist who runs a mental health podcast called *Guftagu Ki Gutargoo*, points out that teenagers can often sense parental discomfort, even if it is not articulated explicitly. A safe space cannot be assumed. It has to be built over time. She says, "When parents prepare children for puberty markers and secondary sex characteristics, they are more likely to grow up into teenagers who feel safe initiating conversations with parents about sexuality and relationships."

She adds, "When teenagers come out as bisexual or express curiosity about bisexuality, it is important for parents to not show a bias or preference. They must focus on offering unconditional support rather than trying to mould teenagers to help them pass as heterosexual."

The gift of emotional safety

Tanaya Narendra, a doctor and health influencer, who wrote the book *Dr. Cuterus: Everything Nobody Tells You About Your Body* believes that "the greatest gift an adult can offer is emotional safety". This involves listening, supporting, and reminding teenagers that uncertainty is okay. She says, "The joy of being human is that they don't have to know everything right away!" Instead of asking "Are you sure?", she suggests saying "I'm here, no matter what" because "queerness is not a problem to be fixed, it is one of the many ways to be human".

She does not think of the generation gap as unbridgeable. She notes that "the absence of language does not mean the absence of feelings". Here are some things that adults can do: "Read/consume content from queer voices, talk to therapists, and most importantly, question the beliefs you inherited. Teenagers don't need perfect parents or teachers, but they need available ones. You can change their world with your presence, patience, and willingness to learn."

Having observed that, in a large number of Indian families, affection between spouses is kept private but fights happen in the open, Sadaf believes that "teenagers often miss out on seeing the relational aspect of sexual intimacy and sexual orientation". She recommends having conversations with teenagers about specific traits that they like in a person rather than fixating on gender, and also busting the myth that mistreatment is an expression of affection.

Sujata lists out the misconceptions that parents must get rid of. Firstly, bisexuality is not "just a phase". Using such expressions can damage a teen's evolving sense of self, which includes their sexual orientation. Secondly, "there is no cure" because sexual orientation is not a flaw that needs to be fixed. Thirdly, sexual orientation is only one among their various attributes and characteristics, so adults must learn to celebrate them as they are.

Today parents are being asked to offer teenagers the kind of support that they never had from their own parents. Listening to experts can fill that gap but it can also make one feel terribly inadequate as a parent, so it is important to cut oneself some slack while being open to advice.

(The author is a journalist, educator and literary critic.)

DECODED

Gender fluidity: What it's all about

As the name suggests, gender fluidity is the idea that gender is not set in stone: it can shift, blend, or evolve, just like how your persona or even your music preferences change over time. It is possible for a person to feel more masculine some days, other days more feminine and sometimes, neither label feels right, and that is okay. For some, this sounds like confusion, but that's how perhaps real freedom feels. The freedom to explore who you are without having to box yourself into any pre-determined label.

The concept gained traction in the late 20th century as more people began questioning fixed ideas of gender. Today, gender is being reframed as a spectrum, and celebrities have helped popularise this concept. Pop singer Miley Cyrus has spoken openly about feeling genderless, while British singer-actor Harry Styles is well-known for "mixing leather with lace" in his gender-fluid fashion sense.

At its heart, gender fluidity is about celebrating who you feel you truly are; it is a hat tip to authenticity.

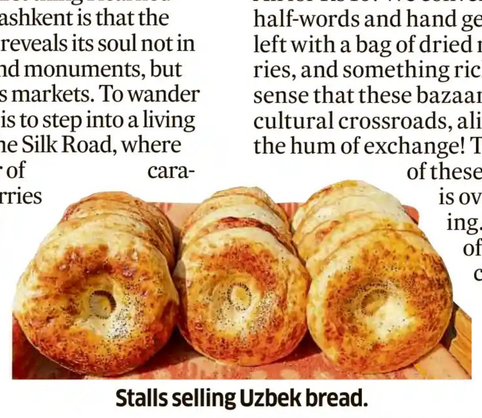
*(**Decoded** is a column that demystifies gender concepts and breaks them down into easy-to-understand language.)*

Travel

Timeless markets of Tashkent

Neeta Lal strolls through the bazaars of Uzbekistan's capital, and is mesmerised by what's on offer — steaming bowls of fragrant soups, cauldrons of plov, spices, herbs and fruits

The first thing I learned in Tashkent is that the city reveals its soul not in grand monuments, but in its markets. To wander through them is to step into a living storybook of the Silk Road, where spices whisper of caravans, bread carries blessings, and every stall feels like a stage set for hospitality. On my first morning in the Uzbek capital, I followed the aromas—smoke, yeast, spice—straight into the turquoise-domed Chorsu Bazaar, and found myself swept into the city's edible heartbeat.



Stalls selling Uzbek bread.

A feast for the senses

Inside, the air was thick with temptation. The nutty warmth of non (round bread) lifted fresh from clay tandoors mingled with the perfume of plov (pulao or the country's national dish) simmering in massive kazan cauldrons. I drifted past stalls stacked with golden apricots, pomegranates bursting like rubies, and glistening slabs of amber honeycomb.

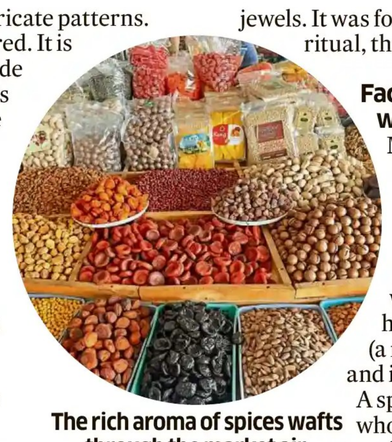
A woman in a scarlet ikat scarf caught my eye. Before I could ask, she pressed a steaming bowl of shurpa—lamb soup fragrant with herbs—into my hands. It tasted like a hug in a bowl! A few steps away, a man deftly folded pastry around a pumpkin filling handing me a sample. The crust flaked, the spice lingered, and suddenly I understood: here, food isn't just sold. It's shared, insisted upon, given as a gesture of friendship.

Stamp of the Silk Road

As I moved deeper into the bazaar, history trailed me like a shadow. This land was once the axis of the Silk Road, where Persians, Chinese, Arabs, and Indians traded not just goods but flavours. That lineage lives on in the market's offerings: cumin and coriander, green tea bricks, saffron, dried fruits so sweet they seem candied by the desert sun.

At Alay Bazaar, one of Tashkent's oldest, I lingered by a stall overflowing with Iranian pistachios, Afghan raisins, and Uzbek almonds. The vendor, an elderly woman with a face weathered like parchment, brewed me a glass of black tea on a charcoal stove. All for Rs 10! We conversed with half-words and hand gestures. I left with a bag of dried mulberries, and something richer: the sense that these bazaars remain cultural crossroads, alive with the hum of exchange! The beauty of these markets is overwhelming. Heaps of emerald cucumbers, pyramids of saffron-yellow melons, baskets of cherries glowing like drops of wine—it felt like walking through a painter's palette.

But the bread displays stopped me in my tracks. Towers of non rose in golden stacks, each loaf stamped with intricate patterns. Bread here is sacred. It is never placed upside down; wasting it is unthinkable. One baker slid a bite of wedding non, thick and braided with sesame, into my bag. "For luck," he said, his smile as warm as the oven behind him.



The rich aroma of spices wafts through the market air.

Food as theatre

There is performance in the markets too. Butchers, their knives flashing, carved lamb carcasses with practiced ease. Spice sellers scooped vivid powders into cones, their stalls perfumed like apothecaries. And then—plov. I joined a crowd encircling a plov master, his kazan big enough to bathe in. With a wooden paddle, he folded carrots, lamb, chickpeas, and garlic bulbs into a shimmering mound of rice. The air quivered with cumin, coriander, and barberries. When he finally served it, I ate standing, the grains buttery and spiced, the lamb tender, the raisins sweet as jewels. It was food elevated to ritual, theatre to taste.

Faces that stay with you

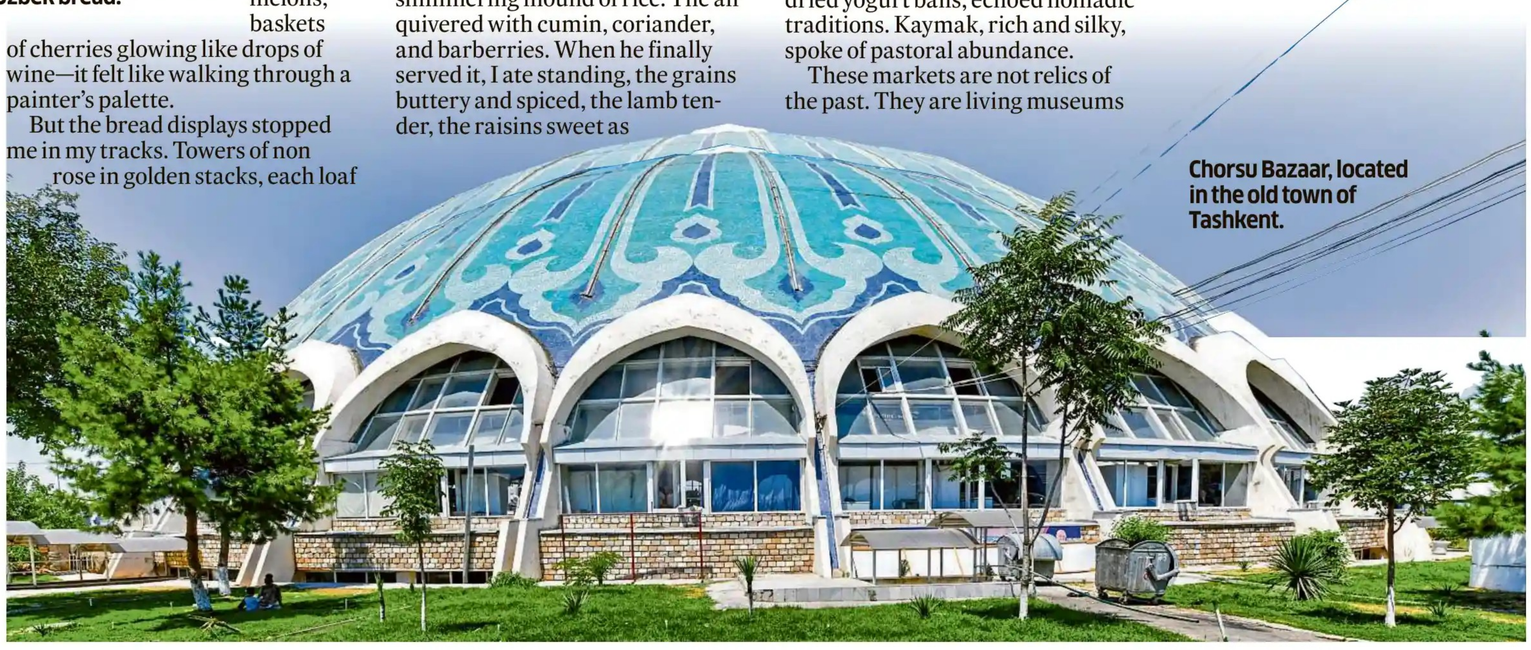
More than flavours, it was people who etched themselves into my memory. A melon seller who sliced open his finest galia (a melon variety) and insisted I taste. A spice merchant who scribbled a plov recipe in Cyrillic on scrap paper. Each gesture reminded me that these markets are about more than trade. They are about generosity, about weaving strangers into a community through food.

As I wandered, I realised the deeper layers of what I was tasting. Dried fruits weren't just snacks—they were sustenance for caravans crossing deserts. Kurut, those tart dried yogurt balls, echoed nomadic traditions. Kaymak, rich and silky, spoke of pastoral abundance.

These markets are not relics of the past. They are living museums where tradition breathes in the present, where the rituals of bread, fruit, and spice tell stories as eloquently as any manuscript or monument.When I finally left, my arms were heavy with saffron, walnuts, and ceramics, but what stayed with me was far less tangible. The memory of bread warm from the oven. The laughter of a vendor teaching me to pronounce "barberry." The way plov steam curled into the air like incense!

Fresh produce is available aplenty.
(PHOTOS BY AUTHOR)

Even later, as the scent of baked non lingered on my clothes, I knew I had carried something more enduring than souvenirs back to India. In Tashkent, the markets are the city's soul—living, generous, unforgettable—and to walk through them is to taste the Silk Road itself.



Chorsu Bazaar, located in the old town of Tashkent.

TOOLBOX

Must-have apps for Uzbekistan

Planning a trip to Tashkent, Bukhara or Samarkand in Uzbekistan? Make sure you land there with all the apps that will help you travel across the country seamlessly.

- Tashkent residents use the 3TM app (Android) to check bus routes and schedules.
- There is an unofficial Tashkent Metro App for Android devices that you can download to make your commute easy and efficient.
- You can download the ATTO app, for replenishing and managing your transport card. The ATTO transport card helps you pay for bus travel and also at all turnstile entries at underground and above-ground Tashkent Metro stations. You can use the card in most cities, including Bukhara and Samarkand, which are popular on the tourist maps.
- For cab rides, use Yandex Go or MyTaxi. Uber is not available in Uzbekistan. It's ideal to use a local SIM card to enable these services.
- For travel between cities, you could look up the Uzbekistan Railways (UZrailways tickets) app for train services and schedules. The different trains such as the high-speed bullet train Afrosiyob are also listed on the app.
- You can use Google Maps for navigation, or 2GIS as well. Yandex Maps also helps with navigation.
- For translation, you could use Google Translate or opt for Yandex Translate, which is widely used in Central Asian countries.
- Food delivery apps include Uzum Tezkor, Express24, Yandex Eats, and FoodChow.
- If you are vegetarian or vegan, you could use HappyCow to give you a range of restaurants that cater to your food preferences in the city/locality you are visiting.
- Uzbekistan Tourism has an Android app for general information about tourist spots and cultural events across cities.
- You could also use UZTrip to look up travel recommendations in the city you are located. It offers the best restaurants, hotels, monuments and even food recommendations from other travellers.
- The apps are available on both Android and iOS devices, unless specified.

*(**Toolbox** is a column that gives you simple hacks to plan your travel better.)*

Red hot chilli oil

Looking to lift the flavour quotient of your instant ramen? Want to add some excitement to your ice cream or even curd rice? Chilli oil is the answer, finds out

Deepa Natarajan Lobo

In a dim-lit Pan-Asian restaurant, curiosity gets the better of us. On the table sit delicate porcelain bowls, their contents glowing ruby in the low light. We open one, and out comes the irresistible zest of chilli oil — smoky, crunchy, and tempting enough to steal the spotlight even before the first dish hits the table.

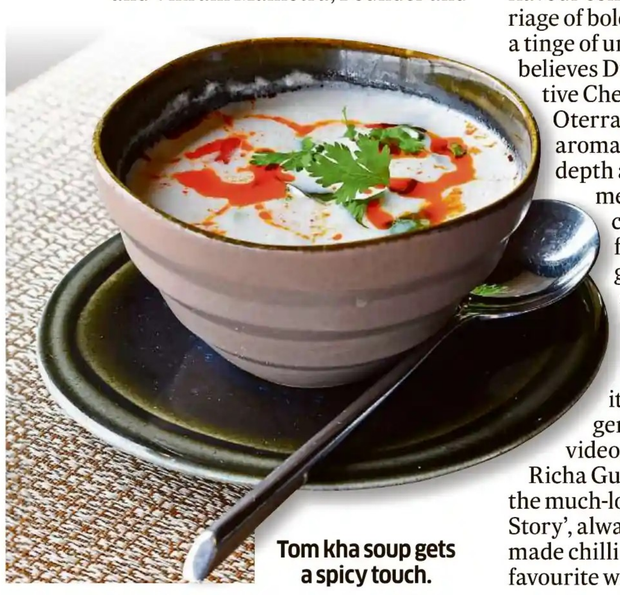
Sometimes sweetened with caramelised crunchy shallots while at others mellowed down with black beans, chilli oil is slowly taking over the kitchens of home cooks and restaurants. What was once an Asian pantry secret is now a food blogger's instant-ramen essential, a beloved slather over breakfast eggs, a dipping sauce for steaming momos and a staple on the tables of fine-dining restaurants.

A drizzle of chilli oil can enhance any dish.

The heat is on

According to Chef Priyank Chouhan, Director - Culinary and Operations at the Pan Asian restaurant Shiro, the fiery drizzle has hit the sweet spot of today's food trends thanks to its bold flavours and global appeal. "It adds instant heat and depth to any dish, making it a go-to side for adventurous eaters. Additionally, it's easy to customise at home, fitting perfectly into the growing 'condiment culture' where sauces are celebrated just as much as the meals themselves," observes the chef, who prepares two types of chilli oil in-house.

One of the most versatile condiments in today's culinary landscape, chilli oil is both an ingredient and an experience, believe Sabrina Sait and Vikram Malhotra, Founder and Culinary Director respectively of the newly-opened Juliana's Bistro. "The heat of the chilli balanced with aromatic spices and oils creates layers of depth that can elevate the simplest of dishes, from noodles and dumplings to pizza or even eggs."

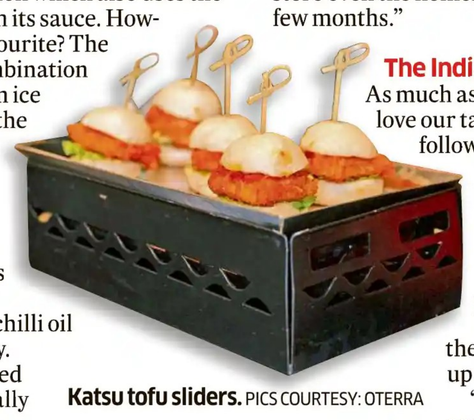


Tom kha soup gets a spicy touch.

Part of its popularity lies in its flavour complexity – the perfect marriage of bold and balanced – adding a tinge of umami to any regular dish, believes Durbar Basu Ray, Executive Chef of the luxury hotel, The Oterra. "Since it layers heat with aromatics, a good chilli oil adds depth and essence to nearly any meal. With its vibrant red colour and oil-suspended flakes, it has an Instagram-worthy appearance and no wonder become part of people's food rituals," he notes.

Talking of Instagram, it's a star among food bloggers who create hit reels and videos on social media with it.

Richa Gupta, owner and founder of the much-loved food blog, 'My Food Story', always keeps a batch of homemade chilli oil in her pantry. "My favourite way to use it is for fried eggs – I heat chilli oil with bits of chilli and garlic instead of regular oil; add some sesame seeds for crunch and then crack eggs right in. The bottom gets extra crispy and delicious," she raves. She also swears by it in her dan dan noodles, of which she has been working on a vegan version which also uses the condiment in its sauce. However, her favourite? The unusual combination of chilli oil on ice cream. "It's the absolute bomb!" gushes the content creator who always keeps a batch of homemade chilli oil in her pantry.



Katsu tofu sliders. PICS COURTESY: OTERRA

When asked if there is really a difference between the bottled versions and the ones made fresh at home, Richa points out that homemade chilli oil is often fresher than store-bought ones. "Even though most bottled versions don't need preservatives since it's oil-based, I still prefer making small batches at home. The flavours are nicer, you can play with the garlic-to-chilli ratio, and it doesn't go rancid or develop that stale smell over time," she explains. Priyank agrees and adds, "Since the oil works as a preservative and the chillies are cooked and get a little dehydrated in the process, you can store even the homemade ones for a few months."

Hot property

With its origins in the Sichuan kitchens of China around the 16th century, where cooks began steeping dried chillies in hot oil to preserve heat and flavour, chilli oil has since travelled across Asia and, now, the world.

The Indian touch

As much as we Indians love our tadka which follows a similar technique of heating oil with aromatics, a jar of chilli oil can be a welcome addition to the table lifting any of the everyday dishes up a notch.

"For a smoky and spicy touch, a little bit of oil can be used in place of ghee or chutney over parathas and dosas. When added to a simple dal or khichdi, it brings the right touch of heat and aromatics without the extra masala," says Durbar to which Richa adds, "Whenever our regular food tastes a bit 'meh', all we do is add a chilli oil tadka to zest it up."

And for Priyank, who also plans to retail chilli oil to an upcoming restaurant, it's about play as much as tradition. "In my kitchen, I use chilli oil both in traditional ways and unexpected ones. As a traditional accompaniment, it is perfect with dim sums and even dishes like sweet potato chilli mash. In starters, I've used it to elevate appetisers such as XO prawns and other chilli oil-based bites. As a marinade base, I mix it with soy sauce, vinegar, and garlic for a punchy marinade for tofu, chicken, or shrimp. In salad dressings, just a few drops added to vinaigrettes or tahini dressings bring warmth and complexity to the dish."

So, the next time you are tired of your routine dal chawal, roti, boiled eggs or even curd rice, remember a splash of chilli oil is all you need to make it come alive and set your taste buds on fire.

Chicken satay with peanut sauce.

HOMEMADE CHILLI OIL

Ingredients

For oil infusion

- Sunflower oil or any other neutral flavoured oil – 1 cup
- Bay leaves – 2
- Cinnamon stick – 1
- Star anise – 1
- Shallots, sliced – 4
- Ginger, sliced – 2 inches

For chilli oil

- Garlic, finely chopped – 1-2 tablespoons (as per preference)
- Chilli flakes – 1/3 cup
- Korean chilli powder (gochugaru) or Kashmiri chilli powder – 1-2 tablespoons
- Sesame seeds – 2 tablespoons
- Light soy sauce – 1 teaspoon
- Salt – 1/2 teaspoon
- Sugar – 1/2 teaspoon
- Toasted sesame oil – 2 teaspoons

Method

For oil infusion

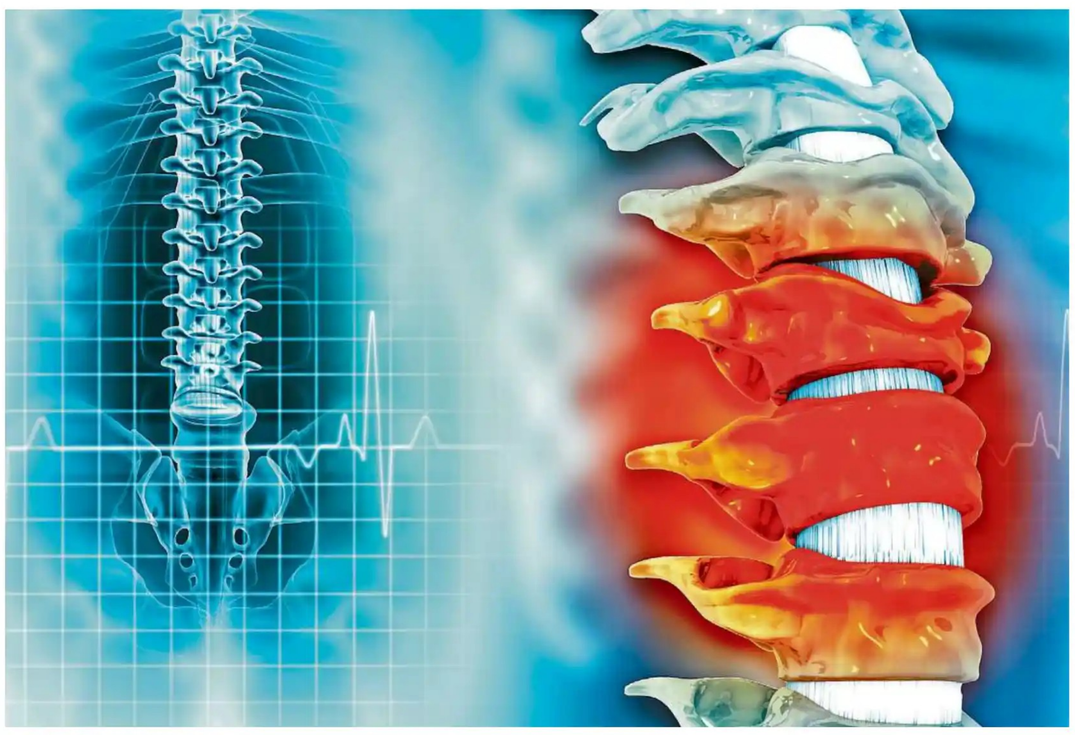
- Heat oil in a large pan or kadai, add the whole spices – bay leaves, cinnamon, star anise, sliced shallots and ginger. You can then fry them on low for 15-20 minutes till the onion and ginger turns golden brown.
- Use a sieve to remove the spices, onions and ginger and discard them.
- Add all the ingredients except garlic mentioned under chilli oil to a bowl.
- Add garlic on top, so when the hot oil is poured, it removes the rawness of garlic and enhances the taste.
- Add 1/4 cup of infused oil and mix well.
- Heat the rest of the infused oil till it starts to smoke. Pour hot oil immediately into the bowl, mix well and set aside for 2-3 hours.
- Store in an airtight container and use as needed. This can be stored outside at room temperature for a week to 10 days. If storing beyond that, best stored in the refrigerator.

Note:

- Because of the aromatics, the oil can start foaming sometimes and spill over. To avoid this, use a large pan or wok while cooking.
- You may use 1-2 tablespoons of garlic based on your preference.
- Gochugaru can be used in the recipe for an authentic Korean flavour. If the Korean chilli powder is unavailable, you may use Kashmiri chilli powder for its red colour and mild spiciness.

Wellness

Stand up for SPINE HEALTH



Sitting, as they say, is the new smoking. A sedentary lifestyle weakens your backbone. The life blood of the spine is motion, so stretch frequently and go for a walk whenever you can, says Dr Amrithlal A Mascarenhas

If you've driven through Bengaluru, you know how relentless the traffic can be. Hours of riding through bumper-to-bumper traffic (on hectic highways), avoiding potholes, or manoeuvring uneven roads cannot just take away your composure but also wear down your spine. Every bump and jolt on those roads puts stress on the lower back. Add to that, long periods of sitting in cars or at desks, and you end up with an ideal recipe for one of the most common causes of chronic lower back pain—lumbar degenerative disease.

Hidden impact of sitting

Here's the thing—sitting may appear innocent, but the human body wasn't designed for over-extended periods of complete stillness. According to physician Mark Hyman, sitting for long hours in poor posture can cause muscles that support your back bone to atrophy and weaken. Combine that with a sedentary lifestyle, lack of exercise and poor ergonomics, and it only gets worse. As your muscles lose their strength, your spine also loses its flexibility. That stiffness raises the likelihood of tiny but painful damage to muscles or tendons, even from everyday activities: bending over to pick something up, or twisting abruptly.

What it really comes down to is that the spine begins to lose some of its natural flexibility. One false move or awkward stretch is often enough to set off pain here, since the supporting muscles are no longer doing their job.

This causes a ripple effect down the road, not only in terms of comfort, but mobility and quality of life as well.

Movement is key

The life blood of the spine is motion. As the knees and hips need regular movement to produce lubricating joint fluid, the spinal discs need motion and pressure changes to keep their discs healthy. These cushioning disks between each vertebra serve as shock absorbers. And unlike most tissues of the body, they lack their own blood supply. They rely on the pumping action of movement to feed and expel waste.

When you're sedentary for long stretches, think desk job, commute, couch-potato lifestyle, those discs aren't getting enough nutrition. With the passage of time, this malnutrition results in disc dehydration and deterioration.

Spiral of degeneration

The degeneration of the discs goes only one way: downward. It is when the disc degenerates, it can become even more susceptible to rupture or herniation. In doing so, the disc material can press against neighbouring nerves and cause pain that may radiate down one or both legs (a syndrome of sciatica). In severe cases, people can be left with numbness or weakness, or difficulty walking — all as a result of the nerves that control leg movement being compressed.

Even the smallest of lifestyle shifts can keep your spine safe from lasting harm. When you live in a city where sitting still in traffic jams from time to time is inevitable, your best offense is keeping as fit as possible when the opportunity arises. A strong and healthy spine is not just about avoiding pain, it's about maintaining the freedom to move, work, and thrive comfortably.

(The author is consultant-spine surgery at a leading Bengaluru hospital.)

DON'T GIVE UP THE GOOD FIGHT...

- Simple, consistent habits help you preserve spine health.
- Find ways to move during the day, take a short walk, stretch or just stand up every hour. Develop your core and lower back strength specifically.
- Yoga, swimming and fast walking are ideal to increase both your flexibility as well as endurance.
- Be mindful of posture, particularly when driving and working. Keep your back straight, shoulders down and heels to the floor.

Prostate cancer: Robotic tech shows the way

DR YUVARAJA T B

TIMELY ACTION

- Men need to tune in to their body, monitor any changes, and take action before the worst transpires.
- Frequent urination or difficulty passing urine are symptoms to track.
- Annual health check-ups can help flag early signs, and lead to timely treatment.

One of the most common cancers affecting men, prostate cancer is quickly evolving to be a pressing health issue in India. The country reported an estimated 50,000 cases last year, making it the third-most common cancer among men after mouth and lung cancers. Now, a recent *Lancet* report has warned that annual prostate cancer cases may reach up to 71,000 by 2040, which is alarming, to say the least. However, advanced technologies like robotic-assisted surgery are providing hope by reshaping prostate cancer care, offering patients safer treatments with quicker recovery times, while enabling surgeons to work with greater precision and efficiency.

Prostate cancer is now being increasingly detected in younger men in their early 40s as opposed to much older men (as was the case in the past). This trend is extremely worrying as many men in this age range continue to ignore early warning signs. Problems such as frequent urination or difficulty passing urine are often brushed off as a natural part of ageing. As a result, people delay seeing a doctor, which worsens the condition.

MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS

Early detection is undoubtedly important to increase survival rates. If prostate cancer is caught in its early stages, it not only improves treatment outcomes but enhances the overall quality of life for the patient as they require less aggressive procedures, spend less time at the hospital, and are at a lower risk of developing long-term side-effects.

Robotic-assisted surgery

Advances in technology have transformed how prostate cancer is treated in India, bringing benefits for both patients and surgeons. Robotic-assisted surgery, supported by advanced systems like the da Vinci platform, has now become the preferred approach in many leading hospitals. Open surgery and laparoscopy, which were once the standard, are now rarely used.

Robotic systems give surgeons the ability to work with much greater precision inside the body. The surgical technique itself becomes more refined, with nerve sparing made easier, bladder neck preservation achieved more consistently, and the urethra clearly visible throughout the procedure. Because everything is under direct vision, the risk of urinary leaks into the abdomen is greatly reduced. The reconnection of the bladder and urethra, known as anastomosis, is stronger and more secure. This improves long-term results and translates into better functional outcomes for patients, particularly in terms of continence and sexual function. For patients, this means they are not only treated with greater safety, but they also recover more quickly. Many men are able to resume normal activities and even return to office work within a week. The risk of lasting complications such as erectile dysfunction or incontinence is much lower.

Greater patient satisfaction

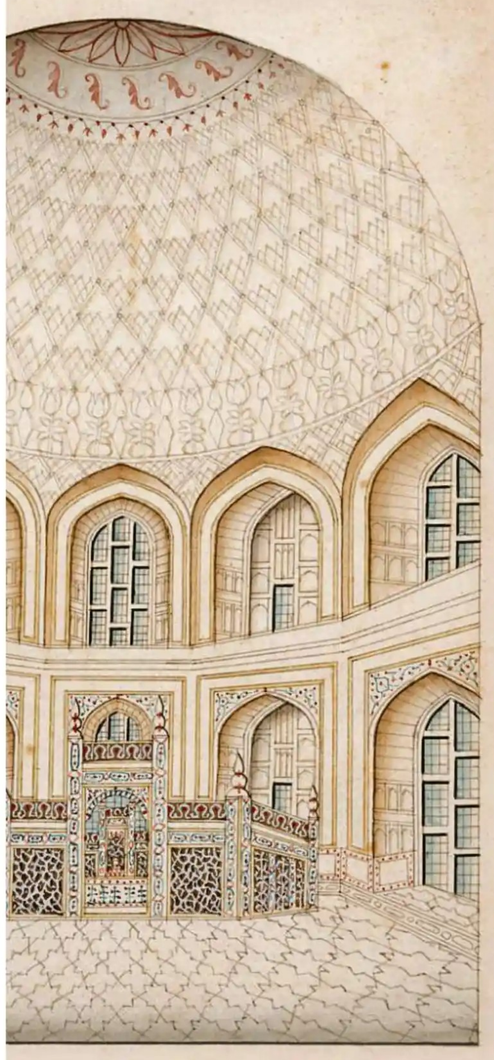
Robotic technology is also helping surgeons manage their time and patient load more efficiently. Earlier, an open prostate surgery would take up most of a surgeon's day. With robotic systems like the da Vinci, surgeons can now complete three or four procedures in the same time.

(The author is a robotic uro-oncology surgeon.)

ON THE PALETTE

A new meditative exhibition reimagines the Taj Mahal as more than just a monument to love and looks at it as a sacred symphony of memory, faith and yearning, says Neha Kirpal

The soul beneath the stone

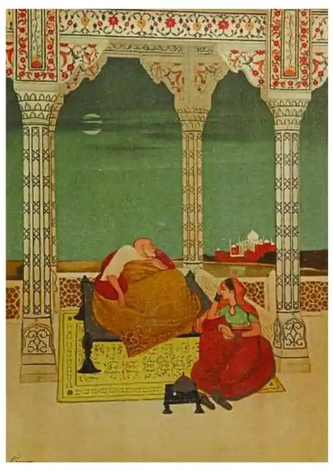


Interior of the Taj Mahal by Agra Artist (Company School), 1810-20.

The Last Days of Shah Jahan by an unidentified artist.
(All pics courtesy: DAG)

The Top of the Cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal, Taj Mahal, by Agra Artist (Company School), 1820.

A new exhibition in Delhi positions the Taj Mahal as a silent, yet 'speaking' agent. Curated by author and historian Rana Safvi, The Mute Eloquence of the Taj Mahal presents a comprehensive visual narrative, comprising 200 remarkable works, including Company School paintings, works by Agra-based artists, visiting foreign and modern Indian artists, plans, correspondence, essays, official reports as well as photographs and postcards by renowned foreign and Indian photographers from the late 18th to the mid-20th century. "When we speak of the Taj Mahal, we begin with the familiar tale of love and loss — Shah Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal and the white marble tomb that became the world's emblem of eternal love. Yet beyond this legend, beyond its marble, poetry and myth, lie a deeper truth. The Taj Mahal is not only a memorial of devotion but an architectural meditation on mortality, resurrection and divine harmony, rooted in Islamic theology and Mughal artistry," explained Safvi.



The Passing of Shahjahan by Abanindranath Tagore, 1903.

As a student, she once saw it as Tagore did, "a teardrop on the cheek of time", a monument born of imperial grandeur and personal grief. But through her study of Islamic architecture and Sufi thought, it revealed itself as something more — not merely a mausoleum, but a bridge between the temporal and the eternal.

"Shah Jahan, an ordained Sufi, imbued the Rauza-e-Munawwara (Illuminated Tomb) with sacred meaning. Its calligraphy, geometry and reflecting pool mirror Quranic visions of paradise, judgement and divine unity. The Taj is thus not only a monument of love, but also a cosmic allegory of transcendence," elaborated Safvi.

Hence, in her second collaboration with DAG on this exhibition, she explores the ways in which the tomb's design and details speak of the beliefs and aspirations of Shah Jahan and his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal through selected quotations from the Quran and the language of flowers.

The sacred and the quotidian

The exhibition is divided into two parts — the sacred and the quotidian. Company paintings by Agra-based artists offer exquisitely detailed visual records of the monument's intricate pietra dura inlay work, serving as invaluable documentary evidence that preserves the monument's ornamental details with exceptional precision and artistry.

A selection of works by visiting foreign artists, ranging from the late 18th-century views of British artist Thomas Daniell to the elegant 1930s woodblock prints of Japanese master Hiroshi Yoshida and British artist Charles William Bartlett, collectively trace the evolving global fascination with the Taj Mahal, revealing how it has been variously interpreted, romanticised and reimagined across artistic traditions. In addition, works by modern Indian artists, including Abanindranath Tagore, L N Taskar, S Bagchi and Jyoti Bhatt, offer powerful interpretations of the monument, reflecting not only its enduring beauty but also its layered historical meanings and cultural significance in the context of an emerging Indian modernity.

Further, a compelling collection of photographs and postcards dating from the 1850s to the mid-20th century, charts not only the evolution of photographic techniques but also the Taj Mahal's enduring role in shaping visual narratives of India, through the work of a diverse group of acclaimed photographers — from European war and commercial pioneers, such as Felice Beato, Samuel Bourne, John Edward Saché and Thomas Rust to renowned Indian photographers like Lala Deen Dayal and R R Bharadwaj. For the first time, selections from the archive of Albert Edward Griessen, Superintendent of the Taj and Government Gardens (1902–1905), are also on public view.

Research for the catalogue and the exhibition has been immense, and took Safvi two years to curate, select and put together. The exhibition and the book explore some less-explored aspects of the tomb and its complex, such as the Taj's role in the commercial life of the city through the almost forgotten market sector known as Taj Ganj and the role of other women besides Mumtaz Mahal in the court of Shah Jahan.

The Mute Eloquence of the Taj Mahal will remain on view until December 6 at DAG, New Delhi.

The Top of the Cenotaph of Shah Jahan, Taj Mahal, by Agra Artist (Company School), 1820.

ROOTING FOR NATURE

The secret lives of velvet spinners

Indian social spiders spin vast cooperative webs that double up as egalitarian colonies where sisterhood, sacrifice and survival intertwine, says Ramya Coushik

A ghoulish guava tree grows along the path to the cottage from Navilu Kaadu's main gate. The boughs of the little tree are perennially sheathed in web and tangled in fibrous clumps. A custard apple tree near the cottage, too, is similarly entangled. My younger one pointed out that both trees were playing hosts to enormous arachnid metropolises! These were the Indian cooperative spiders or social spiders (*Stegodyphus sarasinorum*) from the family Erasidae, also called Velvet Spiders, for the downy hair on their rotund, squat forms. The females measure between 7 and 8 mm. The males are smaller.

Social spider colonies are egalitarian societies.

Spiders of the genus Stegodyphus are said to be the only arboreal or tree-dwelling species among Erasids or Velvet Spiders. While the solitary signature spider (featured in an earlier column) cannibalises siblings and mates, these social spiders throw clichés of lonesome, hostile, mate-eating spiders to the wind! They thrive in large, extended families, build communal nests, care for the colony's young, snare prey and feast on them together.

There are approximately 20 social spider species among more than 53,000 spider species that inhabit our planet.

One marvels at colonies of ants, bees and wasps where the hierarchy and caste decide every inhabitant's life purpose. Each member of the colony performs one designated role all its life, either rearing the young, maintaining the nest, foraging, guarding or reproducing.

Social spider colonies, on the other hand, are egalitarian societies — they are free of hierarchies. No role is ironclad. All female social spiders procreate when food is abundant and nesting conditions are favourable, unlike in most social insect colonies, where procreation is the preserve of the queen.

An Indian social spider colony can hold tens and hundreds of individuals. Females make up most of the social spider colony. Males are a minority. The 'spider women' run the colony — together, they build, maintain and repair nests, care for the colony's young, and take down prey. The colony's males are Casanovas who do little else other than seduce females! Indian social spiders breed between January and April. The females are semelparous, which means they reproduce just once in their lifetime, and death is a planned strategy to nourish their progeny. The female lays up to 550 eggs and cossets them in a silken cocoon or egg sac. Spiderlings emerge in about two weeks. The devoted mother pours herself into their care, feeding them regurgitated formula made from her own liquified innards. Once she exhausts this, the spiderlings climb onto the mum and draw fluids directly from her body, until she is reduced to a lifeless exoskeleton, in a behaviour called 'matriphagy.'

On reaching maturity, the young spiders either continue to live within the colony or may choose to balloon to other social spider colonies. Social spiders fashion nests from twigs, dry leaves, bits of prey parts and their own exoskeletons, all held together with dense spider silk. A larger web span and communal living also mean social spiders are able to deploy pack power to snare larger quarry, sometimes even birds and bats, and the spoils are shared. The inhabitants of the colony emerge at dusk to orchestrate a coordinated attack on any down-on-its-luck mantis, beetle, grasshopper, moth, mosquito, butterfly or dragonfly trapped in their vast capture webs. Scientists have observed that when they are unable to trap enough prey, these smart spiders weave extra tangly webs with a special woolly fibre called cribellate silk that they secrete from a specialised spinning organ called the cribellum. *(Ellendula, S, Tresa, C, & Uma, D, 2021)*

The Indian social spider colonies at Navilu Kaadu do a swell job trapping pests on the farm, in exchange for real estate on a pair of guava and custard apple trees. I'd say this is a solid bargain as far as ecosystem services go!

Rooting For Nature *is a monthly column on an off-kilter urban family's trysts with nature on a natural farm. The author runs Green Goobé, a sustainable venture. Reach her at bluejaydiaries@gmail.com or @ramyacoushik on Instagram.*

Social spiders fashion nests from twigs, dry leaves, bits of prey parts and their own exoskeletons.

MOTLEY GARDEN

A quiet surrendering to a colourful chaos

If you let plants grow in their own way without worrying too much about order and maintenance, you will get to witness a living map of change, writes Subhashini Chandramani

The 'Marvel of Peru' is also known as the Four O'clock flower.

Most people, when they step into my wild garden, ask, "*Maintenance thumba kashta, alva?*" (Maintaining this is difficult, isn't it?) To the untrained eye, the tall trees along the boundary, orchids clinging to the tree barks, lily ponds, and a thicket of green around it can appear chaotic. After a generous monsoon, fed by nitrogen-rich rain, the garden turns lush and unruly. Plants lean on each other to withstand the storm; sleepy seeds awaken, and new saplings push through the damp soil, adding to the crowd.

To me, this is not chaos but a living map of change. Plants age, wilt, sprout, and colour the season in their own rhythm. This year, the garden is carpeted with *Barleria cristata* (also known as the While Philippine Violet) flowers in every corner. In Tamil, it's called December poovu for its winter bloom, while in Karnataka, it's known as Sphatika. *Barleria cristata* is an unassuming white tubular flower, protected by thorny bracts.

The flowers fade, and the plant sets seed. The calyx and bracts dry, harden, and become prickly. When the seeds disperse, the new plants that arise can bloom in shades of pink, lavender, or violet, just as its common name (White Philippine Violet) hints. Each becomes an individual bush. The colour change is not due to the soil or season, but rather a result of the plant's own genetic palette. Within the same species, several natural forms exist, each blending its pigments, anthocyanins, and flavonoids in different proportions. When these varied hues appear across the garden, they come as a surprise. Not far grows its cousin, *Barleria prionitis*, popularly known as Vajradanti. If you are a GenX, you must have heard of a toothpaste of the same name. Vajradanti means "diamond tooth", for its bark and roots were once chewed to strengthen gums and teeth. Its flowers are a bright golden yellow and held between bracts, more spiny than Cristata and hence called the Porcupine flower. A caution against chewing bark or roots: the plant's potency is best harnessed through established medical formulations and not by chewing it raw.

Nature has her moods when it comes to colour. Some flowers open in one shade and close in another, leaving gardeners wondering if their eyes are playing tricks. *Hibiscus Mutabilis*, the cotton rose, is one such chameleon. It opens white at dawn, blushes pink by noon, and retires a deep rose by dusk. The transformation comes from the oxidation of anthocyanin pigments as light and temperature shifts throughout the day. Among the most adaptable of these flowers is *Mirabilis jalapa*, the Marvel of Peru, known locally as Sanje Mallige, the evening bloom. On one plant, you may find yellow, red, magenta, and white flowers, sometimes even two colours fused into one.

Quisqualis Indica (now also classified as *Combretum indicum*), known as Rangoon Malli or Madhumalati, transforms strategically. White blooms open in the evening, attracting night-flying moths with fragrance. By morning, they turn pink, and by afternoon, deep crimson, each shade calling to different pollinators.

Most of these plants thrive in well-draining soil with moderate water. *Barleria* self-seeds enthusiastically, perhaps too enthusiastically, for small spaces. *Mirabilis* and Rangoon Malli both tolerate drought and poor soil and grow vigorously once established. All these plants tell stories of adaptation. They have evolved and learnt to transform with time and temperature. And it's because I let things grow in their own way, without worrying much about maintenance, that I get to witness these changes. To age gracefully after all, is not to resist change but to surrender to it, like a garden that knows when to bloom, when to fade, and when to rest.

Motley Garden *is your monthly kaleidoscopic view into a sustainable garden ecosystem. Write to the author at allthingsinmygarden@gmail.com*

The Rangoon creeper in all its splendour.

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FOR SALE HAROHALLI TOWN 18 GUNTAS AGRICULTURE STATUS, YELLOW ZONE, WITH 30 COCONUT TREES, BOREWELL WITH GOOD WATER, 150 METERS FROM HAROHALLI- KANAKAPURA BYPASS AND WITHIN TOWN, EXCELLENT PROPERTY, VICTORY PROPERTIES, CONTACT: 7411692219/ 8618576685/ 9482303339/ 9686894972, www.victoryproperties.in, info@victoryproperties.in

South

FOR SALE, AGRICULTURE FARM PLOTS OF 5.5 GUNTAS, AT PRIME LOCATION NELGULLI/ SOMANAHALLI, BANGALORE SOUTH, 2.5 KMS FROM BANGALORE-KANAKAPURA NATIONAL HIGHWAY, WITHIN GREATER BANGALORE AUTHORITY, 28 KMS FROM BANGALORE-560082 PIN CODE, CONTACT VICTORY PROPERTIES. 7411692219/ 8618576685/ 9482303339/ 9686894972. www.victoryproperties.in, info@victoryproperties.in

Industrial & Factory

Intl Airport Road

SALE MULTIPLE Industrial properties from Rs.299 to 359/- sft in Hindupur APIIC, Red Zone, Clear Titles with multiple roads, measuring from half acre to 10 acres. Call Verna Developers, Barton Centre, MG Road. 9916310226.

REAL ESTATE BUYING

House

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BANASHANKARI 6TH Stage 1st`Block Brand New Duplex House For Sale 20x30 N/E Corner Fully furnished. Rs.2cr.Nego SHIVU: 98800-04149

Sites

Banashankari

BDA SITES WANTED ARKAVATHY ANJANAPURA BANASHANKRI 6TH STAGE VISHWESHWARAIAH KEMPEGOWDA ANY BDA LAYOUT: 9845062822/ 8660751654

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Bring: Updated Resume, Photo ID (Aadhaar / PAN), Educational Certificates, Experience Letters (if any), 2 Passport size Photos to receive OFFER ON THE SPOT

Date: **Tuesday, 4 November 2025**
Time: **9:00 AM - 2:00 PM**
Venue: RV University Campus, RV Vidyaniketan Post, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560059. Adjacent to Pattangere Metro Station.

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available in 2nd Floor, in Majestic Terraces Building in Electronic city Phase-1. Contact : 9844023523

RENT PREMIUM 3600sqft furnished office at 4th Flr Vishnupriya Towers Beside Srirampura Metro Station. 6 Cabins, 45 Workstations,Lift, Pantry, Parking. Contact: 9900029200

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BTM- SILK Board (Near Metro Station) OFFICE SPACE, SHOWROOM, GYM 5400 sft 1st Floor Rent: 100/ sft. 9945689847.

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JP NAGAR 2nd phase 1st floor 3 bhk house for rent 50k commercial 9886425997

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VIJAYA BANK layout 3 bhk flat for rent 40k Bannerghatta road. 9886425997

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

General

REQUIRED HOME TUTOR FOR 7th and 8th CBSE (MATHS AND SCIENCE) AT SANKALP SQUARE APARTMENT, RMV 2nd STAGE, BANGALORE Ph: 9945107779

WANTED PHOTOGRAPHER, Graphic Designer, Signage Maker, Helper @ Printz Zone BSK 2nd Stage Call: 6366363929

WANTED OFFICE ASSISTANT (Male), Bommanahalli, Bangalore. Mail your resume to: starsilks@gmail.com

Marketing & Sales

TELECALLERS (FEMALE) BUSINESS EXECUTIVES (MALE) Graduates with English Communication, Computer Knowledge, Basaveswarnagar Media Office: 9845411113

Receptionist/ Secretary

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LADY RECEPTIONIST AGED BETWEEN 25 TO 30 YEARS. MUST BE GRADUATE WELL VERSED IN KANNADA & ENGLISH AND ABLE TO CORRESPOND IN KANNADA & ENGLISH WITH COMPUETER KNOWLEDGE HAVING MINIMUM EXPERIENCE OF TWO YEARS.

ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES MAY SUBMIT THEIR RESUME WITH LATEST PHOTO BEFORE **17.11.25** TO karnatakafilmhouse@yahoo.com

KARNATAKA FILM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, #28,Crescent Road, BANGALORE-560 001

Teachers/ Professors

SREE VENKATESHWARA ENGLISH SCHOOL #1, V.S Layout Krishnarajapura Bangalore-560036. WANTED TEACHERS: B.A, B.Ed (English & Social Science) Clerks (Graduates with Computer Knowledge) Attractive Salary Contact: 080-25611873 7411135627 Email: svs.krp.bangalore@gmail.com

WANTED TRAINED lady teachers for English science for Primary Highschool Maitri English school Udayanagar Bengaluru16 8892949404

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Business to Business

Business

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Finance

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Brides Wanted

Telugu

TELUGU.DEVANGA, A.P- Boy(Caste no bar). 41Y, 5'5' fair. M.Tech, MCA, IRPM, Gov.Job, 4cr (seeks good girl & family (Direct). 7036361292.

PERSONAL

Change of Name

I,MALUCHA MARY GALSTAUN Residing`at Sarala_Birla Academy BH-3, Jigani_Road, Anekal, Bannerghatta, Bangaluru-560083 have`changed my`name`to MALUCHA_GALSTAUN vide`Affidavit Dtd:24.10.2025 Sworn`Before Notary A.S.Narayana Reddy, Bangalore

I BINA S Nair 67 residing at 007 Poorvi Airavatha Judicial Layout Thalaghattapura Bangalore confirm that Bina S Nair (Aadhaar) and Bina Sasidharan Nair (PAN) are the same person myself An Affidavit on 29-10-25 before Notary D S Chandrakanth City Civil Court Bangalore From now on my name will be Bina Sasidharan Nair

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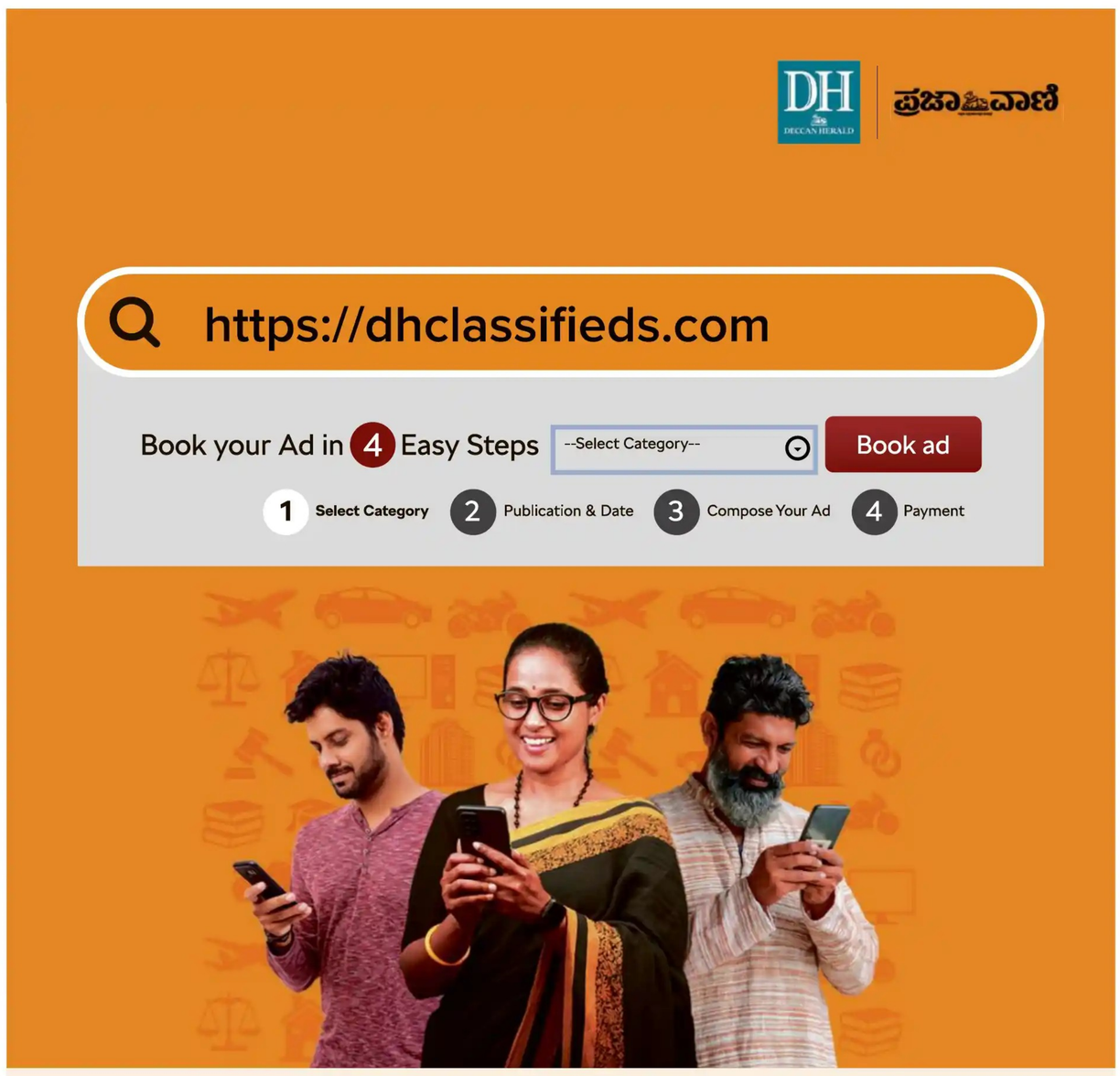

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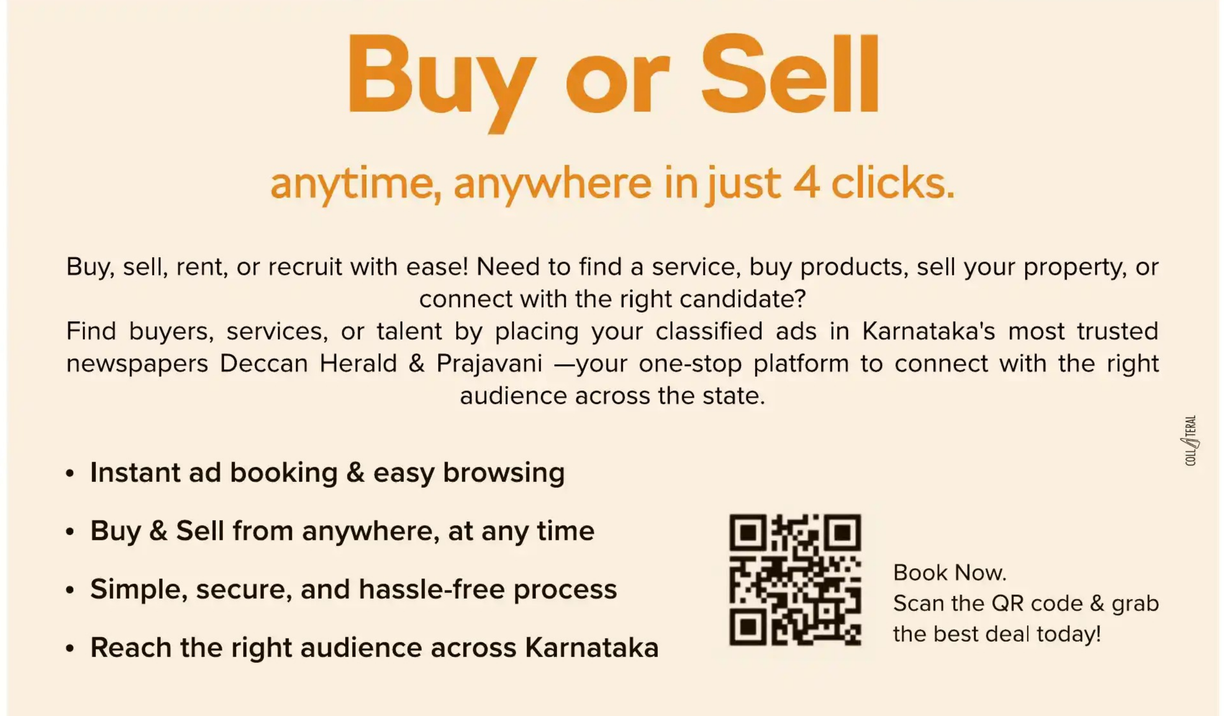
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